

Generals blast public debate on S. Lebanon

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

OC Northern Command Maj.-Gen. Amiram Levine said the public debate over whether or not to keep IDF troops stationed in south Lebanon was having a detrimental effect on morale and was being manipulated by Hizbullah.

"The public debate on sensitive military issues certainly has an influence if it spills beyond the necessary. It has an effect on morale and the decisions of not only on the IDF, but also on the other side. These struggles emerge and are picked up by the media and politicians and reserve officers," Levine told reporters in a briefing yesterday.

Levine was referring to the remarks made Tuesday by Labor MK Yossi Beilin, who called for a unilateral withdrawal from south

Lebanon without a written agreement because too many soldiers were being killed there. Beilin also said Israel's continued presence there was playing into the Syrians' hands.

Beilin said Israel was being kept "hostage" and its soldiers had become "sitting targets."

Head of IDF intelligence Maj.-Gen. Moshe Ya'alon, replying to Beilin, said earlier this week that the IDF position was not to leave the security zone.

Levine's retired predecessor, Maj.-Gen. (res.) Yossi Peled also cautioned against the public debate on the IDF's presence in Lebanon.

"I am against shutting mouths, but there is some justification with what [Levine] says," Peled said.

"When soldiers are sitting there in the name of the government and in the name of the State of Israel

and then people whom the public takes seriously are saying, 'Let's get up and leave,' then it certainly has an effect on the morale, readiness, determination and faith that what they are doing is really necessary," Peled said on Army Radio.

The tactic the IDF has employed in its "low-intensity conflict" in Lebanon is mainly a defensive posture, peppered with special units like the Golani-backed Egoz and other elite units like the Nahal reconnaissance squad which was hit yesterday.

Top field commanders in Lebanon are known to be pushing for their hands to be untied and allowed to initiate more operations against Hizbullah. Last week, reports surfaced that a senior commander in Lebanon criticized before top IDF brass, including the chief of staff, what he saw as a

restrained policy against Hizbullah.

However, the IDF has to walk a fine line. The Hizbullah traditionally attempts to escalate conflict before a resumption of peace talks with the Syrians. The IDF wants to prevent Katyusha rockets from threatening the North while keeping casualties to a minimum.

Government coordinator of activities in Lebanon Uri Lubrani said he completely agreed with Levine.

"This is a free country and there are many opinions," Lubrani said. "For many years we have been looking for a better, safer alternative for the quiet along the northern border than the present deployment."

"We don't have any magical solutions," Lubrani told Army Radio. "There is no other way. We simply have to just grit our teeth."

PM to meet Mubarak, Arafat during Davos business conference

By DAVID MAKOVSKY

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu heads to a major international business conference today in Davos, Switzerland, where officials said he hopes to reap political and economic dividends from the recent Hebron pullback accord.

Meanwhile, Netanyahu's foreign policy adviser Dore Gold returned last night after a 24-hour visit to an unknown destination. The speculation is that Gold visited either Cairo or a destination in the Persian Gulf. When asked to comment, Gold would only say that the trip was made "in preparation for Davos."

Netanyahu and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak will meet Sunday in Davos, after both appear at a panel on Middle East

peace alongside Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat.

Netanyahu will hold private sessions with each on Sunday.

The meeting between Mubarak and Netanyahu will be their first since last July. The July session was congenial, but the relationship deteriorated after Mubarak accused Netanyahu of bad faith during the Hebron talks.

Netanyahu will also meet with Swiss President Arnold Koller. The two are expected to discuss the issue of the Holocaust-era Jewish assets in Swiss banks.

The conference, sponsored by the World Economic Forum, brings together an estimated 2,000 leaders of corporations, central bank heads, and key leaders, including Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and South

African President Nelson Mandela. Other prominent figures attending are the new UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the US House of Representatives.

Access to top leaders is why companies spend thousands of dollars for the chance to send senior executives to Davos.

"People are increasingly concerned about Russia and they will see Russian officials here. The Middle East is going to be a big issue and a number of the major players in the Middle East are going to be there," Robert Horvath, vice-chairman of Goldman Sachs International, told Reuters Television.

After Davos, Netanyahu heads to Rome, where he meets Italian leaders. He will also meet Pope John Paul II for the first time.

'However nice you were to him, he was even nicer to you'

By URIEL NEILMAN

When a roadside bomb that exploded early yesterday morning in the security zone took the life of Sgt. Rotem Sharvit, a 19-year-old soldier from Jerusalem, friends and relatives say the world lost a boisterous and clever individual who was always ready to help others.

"However nice you were to him," explained Yirmi Ben-Moshe, one of Rotem's best friends, "he was even nicer to you."

The middle child in a family of two girls and one boy, Rotem grew up in the Jerusalem neighborhood of Gilo, attending local schools while making time for his passions of driving, surfing, watching movies and karate, in which he had become a brown belt.

His mother, Tali, remembers his lack of enthusiasm for school, insisting that his singularity could be found in his love for bringing joy into the lives of others.

Friends spoke of the gregarious smile that always seemed to cover Rotem's face, and his father David spoke of his love for his family and his girlfriend of four years, Dikla Amir.

Dikla's father recalled how, when he saw Rotem dancing at his other daughter's wedding a week

ago, he kept seeing Rotem as the bridegroom.

"He was like a son to me," Amir insisted.

Once inducted into the IDF, Rotem spent five months in a pilots' training course before being transferred to a reconnaissance unit of Nahal, in which he had been serving for eight months. When he was relocated to the North just two weeks ago, he put off telling his parents until recently, preferring not to worry them, according to friends.

"He knew how important it was to us that he stay safe," said his mother, who talked about Rotem's plans for an adventure in New Zealand and Australia following his release from the IDF, after which he had planned to go into business.

The Sharvit household was packed with so many mourners that visitors had to wait in the apartment next door before getting a chance to console Rotem's parents. While some couldn't stop the flow of tears, others simply found themselves in a state of disbelief.

"He came over last Shabbat," recollected Zahava Ben-Moshe, a family friend and neighbor. "The meal didn't seem to end. He is usually so restless, but this past Shabbat he sat for a long time, laughing and talking."



David Sharvit attempts to console his wife Tali at the funeral of their son Rotem.

(Flash 90)

Weizman: No negotiations under current circumstances

By BAT-SHEVA TSUR

Israel cannot sit down with the Syrians at the negotiating table as long as the situation in Lebanon continues as it is now, President Ezer Weizman said yesterday.

"The Lebanon issue is a very grave and [has to be viewed] both from the political and the military points of view... It is, of course, connected from the political point of view with Syria," Weizman said yesterday. He was responding to reporters' questions during a visit to the South following the news of the death of the three soldiers.

"From the political point of view, I hope, we are on the threshold of talks with the Syrians," the president said. "But I am convinced that we cannot start talking so long as things continue in Lebanon as they are now."

Weizman said, in response to a question, that he would not call on Syrian President Hafez Assad to restrain the Hizbullah. He said that his previous calls to Assad had met with no response. But, he said, Assad was aware that peace was vital to both sides and I hope he will at last understand this."

Intimating that Israel should maybe change its tactics or strategy in Lebanon, Weizman said: "I do not plan to comment on the military aspects now. Many people have different ideas."

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Soldiers salute Tzirkel

"We of 'The Tzirkel Squad' don't know what to do, or how, because our father - which is what we called you behind your back - is no longer with us," members of Lt. Yonatan Tzirkel's unit said yesterday at his funeral on Kibbutz Shoval in the Negev.

Tzirkel, 21, killed in yesterday's roadside bomb attack with two of his men, had been active in the Hashomer Hatzair movement before joining the army, and was known for always lending a helping hand on the kibbutz.

"The army was important to Yonatan; and after he finished his officer's course, there was a smile of contentment on his face," his brother Boaz remembered.

His soldiers said he reminded them of something strong, steady, like a tree with a trunk that doesn't bend in the wind. That's the way you were - not straying a meter from the path, the true path.

He is survived by his parents, a brother and a sister.

Kibbutz mourns Sadan

By DAVID RUDGE

The death of Sgt. Niv Sadan, 19, of Kibbutz Meggido, cast a pall of mourning over the members of the community and those who knew the young soldier from his school days.

The sense of loss was heightened by the fact that one of his classmates from the regional school and a neighboring kibbutz was killed less than three months ago in the naval commando training accident in Haifa port.

As friends and members of the kibbutz gathered at his home, Niv's mother, a psychologist, and his father, personnel manager of the Polygal plastics factory on the kibbutz, tried to come to terms with their loss quietly and alone.

"Niv's death is a terrible blow to all of us on the kibbutz, especially his parents, his elder brother Lior, who is due to be released from the army in a month's time, and his younger sister, who is in high school," said Giora Sela, coordinator of the kibbutz.

Sela said that all of the boys in Niv's grade in high school had volunteered for combat units.

"Motivation among this group in particular has not disappeared," he said.

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The challenge of clean government

The accusations by Avidgor Lieberman, government officials cannot speak for them-

Israel has long suffered from the attitude that the law and the public mores that surround it are things to get around, rather than uphold. The Netanyahu government should not regard public demands for clean government as a media conspiracy, but as a challenge, alongside the challenges of forging a secure peace and reforming the economy. A good way to start is to make sure that senior officials do not vent their frustrations in a way that undermines public confidence in those entrusted with enforcing the law.

A solid

Rumor – it isn't journalism

Approached by a blackmailer with a copy of a love letter Lord Wellington had authored, the hero of Waterloo retorted: "Publish, and be damned!" A look at the story that broke last week of a presumed "fix" between politicians and the previous attorney-general appointee shows that the Israel Broadcasting Authority appears to have distorted the message implied in Wellington's oft-quoted remark.

In this latest imbroglio involving the media and the political echelon, TV reporter Ayala Hasson and editor Rafik Halaby seem to feel that journalistic ethics allow them to report a story without offering any impartial evidence to back it up. Viewers are supposed simply to trust them.

But to those involved, figures whose reputations and careers are under threat, they are saying, "We'll publish – and you'll be damned!" There is a major difference between the IBA and the privately-owned press.

Private journalists are governed by their own professional code of ethics; for them the law only comes into play in cases where libel is an issue.

Israel's Press Council instructs its members not to "reveal information conveyed to them on the condition that it remain confidential, and not [to] identify a confidential source unless the source agrees." American and British codes refer to "protecting confidential sources of information."

The IBA, however, is explicitly directed by law to "broadcast reliable information." The same law, the Law of the Israel Broadcasting Authority, paragraph 4, also dictates a modicum of balance in presenting views and opinions.

As a public broadcasting system, the IBA owes those who pay the special license fee the right to judge whether or not the news it presents is indeed reliable.

Why should the police, as the result of a criminal investigation, be the first to get a look at the factual basis underlying a highly damaging report such as the "Bar-On-for-Hebron deal"?

YISRAEL MEDAD

If the IBA wants to protect its sources, fine. But why should viewers be left in the dark without any objective evidence to explain why IBA executives are so confident about the veracity of their reporter's revelations?

After all, the public essentially owns the authority, and the authority's obligation is thus to the public.

In addition to serving the principles of truth and freedom of the press, the IBA is also obliged to act responsibly.

Interestingly, Hasson's scoop was not passed on for vetting by the IBA's own legal adviser.

Respect for the public demands real, independent corroboration

This is a highly unorthodox failure. A news item of this magnitude and potential ramifications should have been submitted to the legal test before being exposed to the light of day.

But of course, if a reporter or editor is thinking not about the public interest, or even about ethics, but only about a private agenda, such negligence becomes understandable.

Although IBA Director-General Moti Kirschbaum and TV director Yair Stern have taken pains to distance themselves from any "political" involvement, two stories from recent months point to a problem in the IBA, one that generates an unhealthy tension when the government is the subject of reportage.

INITIAL IBA coverage of Benjamin Netanyahu's US Social Security file "in the name of one John O'Sullivan" was not only severely critical of the prime minister's supposed behavior, but unbalanced and solely dependent on outside sources.

Eventually Steve Leibowitz – who works for the IBA's English News division and also reports for *The Jerusalem Post* – tracked down the real story on his own initiative. Netanyahu's financial irregularities were proved to be nonexistent.

A second incident was the question of who was telling the truth about the deliberations prior to the opening of the Hasmonean tunnel exit. Was it GSS Head Ami Ayalon, or the prime minister?

Again, without any real information except what is referred to in the trade as "chats in the corridor," the IBA waded into the anti-Netanyahu campaign with gusto.

When the prime minister's spokesman took the rare step of calling in political reporters and showing them the relevant sections of the cabinet minutes, it turned out that the IBA was again backing the wrong story.

Hasson has altered her initial report, which hinted broadly that Netanyahu himself was involved in the deal concocted between attorney-general candidate Roni Bar-On, MK Aryeh Deri and the director-general of his office, Avigdor Lieberman.

The problem, though, is that IBA consumers have been presented with no document, photograph or any other objective proof that what Hasson claims happened – and that her editor insists is "backed up by a thousand tons of cement" – is the truth.

If the story is so good, and – undeniably – crucial for Israel as a democratic society, why not let the public into the know? And if there was no way to do that without compromising sources, why not wait a few days more in the hope of acquiring additional corroboration of such an explosive story?

Respect for the public has sunk very low, and that can't be anything but bad news.

The writer is director of Media Watch, a non-partisan advocacy group concerned with the ethical and professional standards of the media in Israel.

A solid piece of advice

The best advice the new attorney-general, Elyakim Rubinstein, could give Prime Minister Netanyahu is to end the practice of making the attorney-general a regular participant in cabinet meetings.

Menachem Begin's institution of the custom was part of his exploitation of the symbols of statehood to strengthen the legitimacy of his government. With time, it has come to symbolize a major flaw in our constitutional system: confusing the legality of politics with the rule of law.

This confusion infects much of our public life. The reaction to the TV scoop on the abortive appointment of Roni Bar-On to the post of attorney-general is a case in point.

Legality is almost certainly not the major issue. In fact, it may not be an issue at all.

Making the attorney-general a regular participant in cabinet meetings was part of the process by which the confusion between the legality of politics and the rule of law was created.

Political issues were converted into questions of law. The attorney-general became the arbiter of ethical standards in government.

Thus, Begin asked attorney-general Yitzhak Zamir whether Ariel Sharon could remain a minister in the government after the Kahane Commission, which investigated the massacre in the Beirut refugee camps, recommended he be ousted from his post as defense minister.

Zamir should have told Begin to read the commission's report and make his own decision. Instead he gave his affirmative ruling, approving Sharon's continued membership in the government, thus making a political issue into a legal one.

At the same time, the post of attorney-general was garbed in a judicial mantle. Accepting the attorney-general's advice became mandatory for the government and for the prime minister.

Aryeh Deri was ousted as a minister as a matter of law, because the attorney-general so advised prime minister Rabin in a formal legal opinion, which the High Court upheld.

ALLAN E. SHAPIRO

Both Rabin and Deri reacted in a similar fashion. Rabin wanted to get himself a different lawyer. However, the High Court held that he was stuck with the one he had. He wasn't even allowed to get another lawyer to present his point of view in court.

Deri was satisfied with his lawyer. He could be forgiven if he wanted to get himself a different attorney-general.

WHERE all this is leading is only too clear: The attorney-general is working himself out of a job. The long-term process is similar to what has already taken place with regard to judicial commissions of inquiry.

The new attorney-general should recommend his own absence from cabinet meetings

No government, except in very special circumstances, will decide to create such a commission. They not only are fact-finders, but they also make recommendations – on both personnel and policy.

What government, if it believes that it has a popular mandate to make decisions in these areas, would take the risk of setting up a judicial commission of inquiry?

Judicial commissions of inquiry have become too powerful for their own good. So has the attorney-general, if he is set up as an in-house arbiter of ethical standards within the government. It weakens his ability to perform as legal adviser to the government and its spokesman before the judicial bar.

No wonder successive prime ministers have sought legal assistance elsewhere.

Ya'acov Ne'eman and Ram Caspi drafted the pardon petition for the national unity government during the GSS Affair in 1986. Caspi was called upon once again to handle the legal tangles with the

Americans after Jonathan Pollard's arrest for espionage.

Elyakim Rubinstein, the newly designated attorney-general, should understand this subject thoroughly from his experience as cabinet secretary, under both Yitzhak Shamir and Yitzhak Rabin.

In fact, in 1991 he and Shamir agreed that Rubinstein's title would be changed to include the designation of counsel to the prime minister.

No change whatsoever appears to have been contemplated in Rubinstein's duties, which already included many functions legal in nature. The attorney-general, Yosef Harish, charged that the change in title of the cabinet secretary was a serious infringement of the prerogatives of his office, and the plan was dropped.

If the attorney-general really becomes an outsider from the point of view of the government, chosen, perhaps, like a judge, as MK Shaul Yahalom, chairman of the Knesset law committee has proposed, it is almost inevitable that there will be a counsel to the prime minister, in fact if not in name. This would fit the pattern set by the direct election of the prime minister.

Like an American president, he would have his own legal counsel, apart from the attorney-general. When Franklin Roosevelt instituted the practice, with the appointment of Samuel Rosenman as counsel to the president, the title of the office was changed to special counsel to the president, to assuage the apprehensions and injured pride of the attorney-general.

Netanyahu is no different from his immediate predecessors if he wants his own lawyer. Rubinstein can fill the bill and also preserve the rule of law.

To do so, he should project a more modest conception of his office than has become fashionable in this age of legal imperialism. Absenting himself from cabinet meetings would be a salutary beginning.

The writer is a legal and political commentator.



Return of the Wandering Jew

AMOTZ ASA-EL

AFTER seeing, in 1542 in a Hamburg church, a tall bearded, barefoot beggar in rags beating his breast, lowering his head and sighing deeply whenever he heard Christ's name, Schleswig's Bishop Paulus von Elzen had no doubt: He had seen Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew.

The esteemed clergyman was just one of numerous people who, over the centuries, claimed to have met the man who struck Jesus on his way to the crucifixion and was consequently condemned to roam the world without ever having a patch of it to call his own.

A plethora of prominent writers from Goethe to Gorky were fascinated by this character, who lent himself so easily to metaphor.

Some, like Christian Schubart's *Der ewige Jude*, described the despair that overcame the Wandering Jew after his failure to die in battle, fire and tempest; others, like William Wordsworth, returning from an arduous hike across France where he had left an illegitimate child, echoed their own travails through him.

For us Israelis, the Wandering Jew is neither echo, metaphor, nor myth; he is a palpable reality which, if absentee voting becomes legal, may turn into thousands of Wandering Jews emerging on election day from their caves anywhere between New York and Melbourne in a fascinating attempt to attach the *ewige Jude* to his roots.

Some Zionists also have a Wandering Jew myth which, like Stalin's "rootless cosmopolitanism" propaganda against a predominantly Jewish intelligentsia, sees emigration as something in between tribal treason and religious blasphemy.

According to this attitude, those who seek their fortunes abroad are "a residue of wimps," as Yitzhak Rabin once described them. Surely, then, like Pilate, Cain and Prometheus, they deserve a timeless punishment.

After all, other emigrants merely abandon their fellow goyim; the yordim abandon us!

The thought that emigration is itself a form of voting, albeit with one's feet, apparently never occurred to the opponents of the proposed bill, most of whom conspicuously represent Israel's traditional, Labor-led elite. Yet emigration – at least since Abraham, the first yored, substituted a destitute Canaan for a prospering Egypt – can be traced primarily to one thing: livelihood.

The thousands who have left this country since its establishment are a grim reminder of our founding fathers' failure to create here the kind of economic opportunities offered elsewhere in the West.

Yet, rather than exploring the reasons for the abandonment of this country by its best and brightest, people like MK Yossi Sarid

Wandering-Jew prejudice. He believed he would ultimately induce Western Jews to abandon the Diaspora's golden calves and join his socialist experiment. In reality, only a minuscule minority of Western Jews actually came here. They were usually idealists in search of a purer life, sometimes Meyer Lansky types who had more prosaic rea-

would highlight our possession of this omnipresent, unconventional weapon.

Perhaps the wanderers among us, whether a falafel grocer in Manhattan, a high-tech entrepreneur in Palo Alto, or a hitchhiker in Nepal carry a few of Ahasuerus's genes; but they are no longer the servile, drooling, hunchbacked, tear-sodden caricature he was. Rather, they are free people who have served in a Jewish army, and for often more time than some of the self-righteous MKs who (conveniently ignoring haredim and Arabs) now say absentee voting should be the exclusive right of those who fight Israel's wars.

But whether or not the Diaspora impresses anyone as a powerhouse, who if not we Israelis, should realize that the Wandering Jew is no monster. Antisemitism thought of him as a monument to their religious truth; in fact he merely reflected their own narrow-mindedness. Similarly, the same Israel that traditionally preferred to see in its emigrants' flight anyone's failure but its own, now assumes they would contaminate the political process.

The truth is that an emigrant's vote, a reflection of the tears, hopes and kin he left behind, would contribute an integral part to Israel's political mosaic.

Finally, redeeming the Wandering Jew from his rootlessness would achieve what, according to the Christian myth, was not supposed to happen until the Second Coming. And that alone would be fun to witness.

The writer is a member of The Jerusalem Post editorial staff.

He may emerge in his thousands from the caves of the Diaspora for Israel's next elections – and why not?

are seeking refuge in cheap patriotism, asking how citizens who are physically distant can decide the fate of a country at war. Lurking behind this attitude is a deep-seated disdain for the Diaspora phenomenon per se, an attitude not unlike that of antisemitism.

Zionist dogma has traditionally rejected Diaspora-tolerant views, whether those of classical Reform, which thought the Jews were a non-nation destined to dwell among other nations as a sort of spiritual fertilizer; those of the Volkists, who contended that the Jews were a nation, but one which, every few generations, builds new geographic centers; or the post-1967 American-Jewish view, which seeks a Babylon-Jerusalem parity between a proud state of Israel and an affluent Western Jewry.

Israelis, for their part, preferred to follow in the footsteps of David Ben-Gurion, who, even in the early 1950s, couldn't part with his

sons for fleeing their places of birth.

The point is that practically none sought in Israel the economic opportunities they lacked abroad.

But it's time they did.

FOR THAT to happen we here must cease to invest energy in massaging away the emigrants' guilt. Instead, their departure should prod us into shaping an Israel to which people will flock not only for mental refuge or physical asylum, but because it's a darn good place to live, by anyone's standards.

Moreover, half a century after its establishment Israel should openly admit that the Diaspora is not a tolerable anomaly, but a uniquely strategic asset, possibly equal in value to our nuclear capability.

No other small nation has such an efficient tool with which to exert pressure and promote its interests across the world. Absentee voting

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Yeltsin returns to Kremlin office

From Post news agencies

MOSCOW — President Boris Yeltsin was shown on television working in the Kremlin yesterday for the second time this week — demonstrating he is remaining command of the ship of state while recovering from pneumonia.

A brief, five-second film broadcast by Russia's independent NTV network showed Yeltsin smiling broadly as he greeted the country's Constitutional Court chairman.

Yeltsin looked slightly hunched but appeared to be moving easily as he walked to his chair.

"He's gaining. It's obvious from his mood and activity," said presidential press secretary Sergei Yastrzhembsky.

In the late morning Yeltsin's limousine with its presidential flag swept at high speed through Moscow, led by a four-wheel drive car packed with bodyguards. The flashing lights and siren aroused little interest among passers by.

The television footage showed Yeltsin smiling broadly as he received the court leader, Vladimir Tumanov, in his office for 30 minutes.

He moved slowly to his table. The film was then cut to show him sitting with Tumanov and talking in a relaxed manner.

At one point, the president, speaking in his characteristic low, growling voice, appeared to be expressing a desire to return to a more active life.

"Don't hurry," Tumanov could be heard saying.

In a brief interview following the shots of Yeltsin, Tumanov added: "He looks better in real life than he does on television...though it is clear that the illness is still having its effect on him." Kremlin spokesman Sergei Yastrzhembsky said Yeltsin might hold several more meetings today, including one with his chief of staff Anatoly Chubais.

It was Yeltsin's third visit to the Kremlin since he was released from hospital on January 20 after treatment for pneumonia. He has been spending most of his time in the secluded Gorky-9 official residence outside Moscow.

Yeltsin, who turns 66 tomorrow and is due to hold talks outside Moscow with French President Jacques Chirac on Sunday, has visited the Kremlin only rarely since he won a second term in office on July 3.

He was absent with heart problems for most of the second half of last year — he underwent open heart surgery on November 5 — and he fell ill again with pneumonia on January 6.

The president's long absence has fuelled speculation that he is too ill to rule Russia, and a brief appearance on television on Tuesday did little to calm the rumor mill.

Yeltsin looked alert in the television footage, but he had clearly lost a lot of weight since he fell ill. The film was heavily edited, making it hard to judge his state of health.

Yeltsin's opponents have been lobbying for him to step down.

Earlier this month Deputies in the State Duma, the lower house of parliament, discussed a motion to force Yeltsin out of office for health reasons, although Duma legal experts say it has little chance of success under the constitution.

Aides say Yeltsin has mainly been working on papers since he left hospital. A major topic is the annual state of the nation address to both houses of parliament, expected late next month.

He has also discussed Monday's presidential election in rebel Chechnya, in which the relatively moderate Aslan Mashadov has emerged as the clear winner.

Moscow has ruled out his demands for secession and faces tough negotiations on the issue.



Gandhi remembered

A Hindu priest (right) chants hymns as Tushar Gandhi (second on right), great grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, sits with his wife and children on the banks of the Ganges River besides an urn carrying the ashes of modern India's founding father in Allahabad yesterday. The ashes were immersed in the river by Tushar Gandhi on the 49th anniversary of Gandhi's assassination, after he won control of the urn from a bank where it had lain unclaimed in a vault since 1950.

(Reuters)

Tearful Algerian president leads labor leader's funeral

PARIS (Reuters) — Thousands of Algerians, including a tearful President Liamine Zeroual and the army chief Mohamed Lamari, attended the funeral yesterday of slain union leader Abdelhak Benhamouda in Algiers' El-Alia martyrs' cemetery.

Witnesses said Zeroual, shocked by the death of a man known as one of his strongest political supporters, could not hold back tears, which ran down his cheeks.

Benhamouda's wife, three daughters and two sons, and mother wept in the cemetery.

Security forces were heavily deployed around the union headquarters where Benhamouda was gunned down on Tuesday and where his body lay in state, and at El-Alia cemetery, reserved for Algeria's martyrs.

The government blamed Moslem fundamentalists for his death.

"Hundreds of Ninjas (anti-terrorist troops) were on guard, with dogs trained to detect bombs," one witness said, a reminder of bombings in Algiers and elsewhere in the past two weeks.

Traffic stopped across Algeria at 1 p.m. in response to a call by the union for one minute of silence in his memory. The radio said that in his home town Constantine, workers rallied at the local cemetery where the "prayer for the absent" was said.

Despite the government blaming Moslem rebels, independent newspapers and many ordinary Algerians asked whether they, or political rivals, were behind the killing.

Benhamouda's last words — "Kamel, my brother, they have betrayed us" — gasped out before he died and reported by an Algerian newspaper, added to the mystery.

Those words, the ambush in central Algiers and the escape in the heavily-policed city of the gunmen raised a clamor of questions over his killing and its motives.

Algeria's independent newspapers all asked: "Who killed Benhamouda?" a powerful figure only in his 40s who was preparing to start his own political party.

Blast blows hole in California courthouse

VALLEJO, California (AP) — An explosion felt blocks away blasted a hole in the courthouse here yesterday and knocked out scores of windows, the third recent incident involving explosives in this San Francisco area city.

The blast around 3:30 a.m. shattered windows in the Solano County Courthouse as well as at least four other buildings in the area. There were believed to be no injuries.

Investigators found a wire trailing from the courthouse and around a nearby corner, and it's "reasonable to assume" it was involved, said David Robinson, spokesman for the county sheriff's department.

Authorities said the building would reopen today.

FBI agents were today to help in the investigation, said Clifford Holly of the bureau's Sacramento office.

The hole in the courthouse wall was about the size of a manhole, KGO radio said. A resident told the station the blast "was just like dynamite going off in the back yard." Authorities have said they believe there is a connection between the earlier incidents.

A bomb made of 30 sticks of dynamite and blasting caps was found in a rucksack leaning against the wall of the John F. Kennedy library on Saturday. It had not been wired to go off.

A second device exploded about 12 hours later in front of a set of Wells Fargo ATM machines a few km away.

No one was injured and no money was taken.

Investigators speculate the automatic tellers were the intended target of the first bomb, but the attempt was aborted for some reason and the bomb abandoned.

Anti-Christian rampage in Indonesia

JAKARTA (AP) — Thousands of Moslems ransacked churches, banks, shops and cars yesterday after a Chinese Christian trader reportedly insulted Islam by complaining about loud evening prayers, police and witnesses said.

Police reported no casualties and said the violence was brought under control after three truckloads of troops armed with automatic weapons moved into the town of Rengasdengklok, 50 km east of Jakarta.

Police Sgt. Jumhalim said the unidentified Chinese trader sought police protection after the mob set fire to his home and shop. No one has been arrested, said Jumhalim, who like many Indonesians uses only one name.

Witnesses said thousands of angry Moslems armed with stones and sticks came out of mosques and homes after morning prayers and went on a rampage.

Four churches, dozens of shops, two banks and a Chinese temple were ransacked. The mob also stoned and wrecked 18 cars, setting fire to some of them.

Smoke billowed from one church that was set ablaze, said Joko, a nearby resident. The troops set up road blocks on main streets, warning citizens to stay away from the stricken area, he said.

Joko said the riot was apparently set off by a rumor that a Chinese shopkeeper, a Christian, had complained about the loud prayers at a mosque in the evenings. It was not clear if the trader actually made the remarks.

The ethnic-religious riot is the latest in a series of clashes in the past few months between the two communities.

Ethnic Chinese, mostly Christians traders, are far wealthier than the vast majority of Moslems in Indonesia. About 90 percent of

Indonesia's 200 million people are Islam.

A curfew has been imposed in the area to prevent further outbreaks of violence, Indonesian television reported.

About 40 masked men ransacked a Roman Catholic group's office in a remote Indonesian province on Borneo Island and set ablaze a truck and two motorcycles.

Earlier this month, 5,000 indigenous people called Dayaks, who are mostly Christians, rampaged in the same province, attacking property belonging to Moslem settlers from other parts of Indonesia.

In December, four people were killed and more than 100 buildings burned in Moslem-Christian riots in the West Java town of Tasikmalaya. Five people were killed in October when thousands of Moslems in the East Java town of Situbondo attacked dozens of churches.

Zaire army on defensive on many fronts

KINSHASA (Reuters) — Zaire's counter-offensive against rebels has run into difficulty with the mercenary-backed government army on the defensive on many fronts, government and military sources said yesterday.

A senior defence ministry official in the capital Kinshasa said rebels backed by Rwandan troops were heading towards the mining province of Shaba and were within 70 km of the town of Kalemie.

Ugandan troops backing the rebels had reached the Upper Zaire town of Bunia, close to the Ugandan border, which the Zaire army earlier claimed to have partly retaken, the sources said.

"We are having to fight on several fronts," a defence ministry official in Kinshasa said yesterday, asking not to be identified.

He said the Ugandans had crossed into Zaire in their thousands and were now also threatening the town of Watsa, about 200 km inside Zaire. Both Uganda and Rwanda deny that their troops are involved in fighting inside Zaire.

Military sources said Zairean soldiers and foreign mercenaries were based in Watsa, at one point under the command of the Belgian mercenary leader Christian Tavenier.

The accounts from Kinshasa were in line with reports from Rwanda that rebels in eastern Zaire were pushing south and west, opening new fronts to frustrate the army's counter-offensive.

They said rebel targets were Kalemie, their leader Laurent Kabila's home town on Lake Tanganyika, and Lubutu, a key town on the road to the Zairean army's main base at Kisangani.

"The strategy is clearly to stretch out the front as far as possible," a Western diplomat in neighboring Rwanda said.

After losing a long thin strip of eastern territory to Kabila's rebels late last year, Zaire's ailing President Mobutu Sese Seko

launched his army's counter-attack this month.

Western sources in Kinshasa in radio contact with the region said Watsa had already fallen to rebels with Ugandan backing.

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US report blasts rights in China, other countries

WASHINGTON (AP) — China's security apparatus has succeeded in silencing all public dissent against the Communist Party and government, the State Department said yesterday in a global human rights report that also found deplorable rights conditions in Nigeria, Cuba and Burma.

"The Chinese government in 1996 continued to commit widespread and well-documented human rights abuses, in violation of internationally accepted norms, stemming from the authorities' intolerance of dissent, fear of unrest and the continuing absence of laws protecting basic freedoms," the report said.

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Following the unveiling, a memorial ceremony will be held at 3 p.m. at the Park Hotel, 7 Rehov David Hamelekh, Netanya.

Gilberte and the Family

Billions in pensions paid to Nazis

By MARILYN HENRY and news agencies

Germany is paying billions of Deutsche marks in disability pensions to thousands of Nazi "war criminals," according to a German television report aired yesterday.

More than 1.1 million people are receiving a total of DM 13 billion under the German "Social Compensation and Assistance To War Victims" law, according to the Panorama program. To qualify, one must have been injured as a result of war service, without regard to the nature of that war service.

Ignatz Bubis, head of Germany's Jewish community, told Panorama that disability payments to suspected Nazi war criminals makes "a mockery of the real victims." The federal Labor Ministry said Nazi war criminals are not supposed to receive disability pay but conceded there are loopholes.

"This is an unfortunate fact," said a ministry official, who insisted his name not be used.

Gerhard Schreiber, a German military historian, estimated that 50,000 "war criminals" are receiving the monthly pensions, the Panorama report said. Last month, The Times of London reported that thousands of SS veterans — includ-

ing nearly 4,000 in the US and Britain — receive disability pensions from Germany.

Panorama said 179 Latvians who served in Hitler's army, including some who were in the notorious Waffen SS, are receiving German disability pay while 88 Holocaust survivors in the Baltic nation receive nothing from Germany.

These reports come amid new pressure to provide some kind of compensation for an estimated 13,000 Holocaust survivors in Eastern Europe who have been excluded from previous reparations programs. The SS pensions are higher than the compensation proposed for survivors from the East Bloc.

A spokesman for the German Ministry of Labor confirmed that funds are paid to war criminals but said that nothing could be changed for "constitutional reasons."

Panorama said.

One recipient is the former SS Hauptsturmführer Wilhelm Mohrke, a confidant of Adolf Hitler who was commandant of the "Führerbunker" in Berlin during Hitler's last days. According to the US Justice Department, "There is very substantial evidence pointing to Wilhelm

Mohrke's personal involvement in the perpetration of Nazi war crimes" — for his role in the massacre of 72 American POWs in 1944 during the Battle of the Bulge, Panorama said.

About 1.1 million German war veterans or their families are receiving disability payments under the 1950 Federal Benefits Law, the weekly newspaper Die Zeit reported.

These include not just normal soldiers but also about 50,000 suspected "war criminals," (former) members of criminal organizations like the Waffen SS or their wives," Die Zeit said.

Die Zeit documented a number of cases.

It told of Wolfgang Lehnigk-Emden, who was convicted in absentia in October 1994 by an Italian court and sentenced to life in prison for ordering the 1943 massacre of 22 Italians — mostly women and children.

The former lieutenant in Hitler's army is receiving a monthly disability payment of 708 marks (\$431), Die Zeit said.

The Labor Ministry confirmed Lehnigk-Emden receives a disability pension, but only because he was never convicted by a German court.

Public Commission for the Review of Comprehensive Legislation for the Handicapped

APPEAL TO THE PUBLIC

The Minister of Justice and the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs have recently appointed a public commission to review comprehensive policy for persons with disabilities (handicapped). The public is invited to offer suggestions.

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Syriaspeak: Icy winds blow from the North

Experts are worried about the clear message sent by Syria in an extraordinary interview given by its US envoy, Douglas Davis, reports from London

Walid Mualem, Syria's ambassador to Washington and leader of its negotiating team with Israel, offers little hope that Syria will soften its position to facilitate a resumption of peace talks and warns of unstated "options" if the talks fail.

He also delicately lifts the veil which shrouds perceptions in that most tightly controlled and opaque state in the region.

Mualem's reflections are the result of a series of three interviews conducted over a period of time ending in late November with Linda Butler, managing editor of the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, a quarterly published in Washington by the Beirut-based Institute for Palestine Studies. The interview will appear in the journal's winter edition.

Those who have access to advance copies regard it with alarm because of its distortion, intransigence, inflexibility and, not least, its implied threat.

Nor, say veteran observers of the Damascus regime, is Mualem speaking for himself; rather, he is faithfully executing the wishes and expressing the disingenuous, but carefully calculated sentiments of Syrian President Hafez Assad.

The interview, they say, strengthens the view of those who argue that Syria is not serious about making peace with Israel. In the absence of its former Soviet ally, its participation in the peace process has been designed principally to place Washington and to establish its place in a new, bipolar world.

They also fear that the interview, exceptional in its depth, scope and



Syria's ambassador Mualem: The Golan is our territory. It is a sacred cause for the Syrian people, and we will continue to struggle until we recover this territory to the lines of June 4, 1967.

candor for a senior Syrian official, could be the opening diplomatic salvo from Damascus in an offensive that is intended to lead to military conflict.

In the interview, Mualem maintained:

• The late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin had undertaken to withdraw from the Golan to the June 4, 1967, lines and that this had been reaffirmed by his successor, Shimon Peres.

• Rabin and Peres had agreed to a formula that offered equal and mutual security arrangements.

• Syria had rejected Israel's "exaggerated" proposals for normalization and for security

'When Rabin committed himself to withdrawal, he was representing Israel, not himself personally.'

—Walid Mualem

arrangements (which, he admitted, had included the offer to Syria of

an early-warning ground station in Safed).

• Unless Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accepts the Rabin/Peres commitment to withdraw to the June 4, 1967, lines and their commitment to equal, mutual security arrangements, "all options are open."

He also said Damascus had refrained from assisting Peres's election campaign because Syria did not wish to interfere in Israel's domestic affairs.

And he said Syria had refused to "do their work for them" by helping the Israeli government prepare the Israeli public opinion for peace.

'We won't permit a ground station in our territory manned by the Israelis.'

—Walid Mualem

He described Rabin as "reluctant, suspicious, very cautious" but noted that Peres had sent a

message to the negotiators saying he wanted to "fly high and fast."

Mualem blamed the current impasse on Peres, first for calling early elections and then for suspending negotiations over what the Syrian envoy described as "so-called terrorism" following the February/March suicide bombings.

He insisted that Syria regarded Rabin's commitment to a total withdrawal from the Golan as binding on the current government and as the non-negotiable starting point for future talks between Israel and Syria.

US: Syria has not closed the door

HILLEL KUTTNER
WASHINGTON

A senior US official explained the apparent contradiction between Syrian Ambassador to the US Walid Mualem's statements on the withdrawal agreement and the Christopher letter as the Syrians' "tendency to ascribe formal status to things less than formal," which he said "has to be noted."

While the US has not made clear what was contained in the Christopher letter, the official said: "Suffice it to say, our position has been made clear to all the parties concerned about what did or didn't happen [in the talks]. I don't think there's any additional clarification that needs to be given to the Syrians."

The official also said the US does not believe the Syrians have closed the door on resuming talks. The official added that the US will have a better idea about how to bridge the gap when Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visits with US President Clinton early next month.

Asked how to square Mualem's statements with Christopher's letter, the official said: "It means the Syrians want to talk. They want to set out a position publicly that puts them in the best possible light. This is not designed to make it impossible to start the talks."

"A bridging formula is possible," he added. "Much depends on what we hear from the prime minister."

Continued on Page 18



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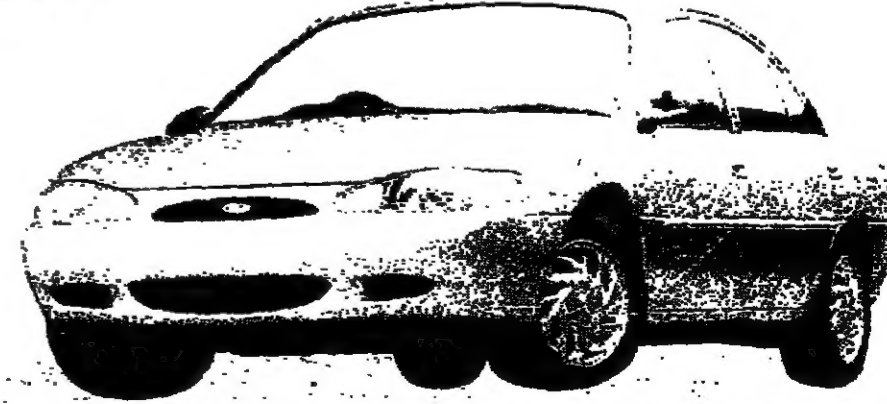
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By URIEL HEILMAN

From left to right in the drawing:

Shaul Yahalom
National Religious Party MK, chairman of the Knesset Law Committee, scoffed at his party's cabinet ministers' attempt to deny having advance knowledge of a Bar-On for Hebron deal. He later retracted a statement (on orders from Hammer) he had made to the press that the NRP's ministers

abstained from the vote for Bar-On's appointment because they knew of the alleged conspiracy.

Elyakim Rubinstein
A Jerusalem court district judge and former cabinet secretary and peace negotiator who was named the new attorney general on Sunday, winning easy cabinet approval.

Edna Arbel
State attorney and acting attorney

general, ordered police to investigate the allegations against Bar-On and Deri.

Ayala Hasson
Channel 1 TV reporter. Alleged that Deri promised Shas's support for the Hebron agreement in exchange for the appointment of Bar-On as attorney-general in an arrangement with Lieberman. According to Hasson, Bar-On was then to grant Deri a plea bargain for the long-standing charges against him.

Hasson refused to reveal her source of information about the conspiracy charges, but has declared that her allegations do not implicate the prime minister.

Oradiah Yosef
Shas spiritual leader, says that

because of his halachic ruling Shas MKs voted for the Hebron deal. He also rejected Deri's request to quit politics.

Mordechai Kirschenbaum
Israeli Broadcasting Authority Director-General, has agreed that

he will have to resign if Channel 1 bungled the story.

David Appel
Prominent Likud activist and millionaire businessman. He is alleged to have suggested Bar-On's appointment to Deri.

Avigdor Lieberman
Prime Minister's Office director-general. Has been accused by Hasson of conspiring with Deri and Bar-On in a deal in which the former would be granted a plea bargain in exchange for the latter's appointment as attorney gen-

Major players in the

Showdown in the not-so-OK Knesset corral

Did Channel 1 recklessly set off noisy firecrackers on Politicsville's Main Street or did someone really hand it potentially lethal dynamite sticks with which to drive the outlaws out of town?

That remains to be seen, but what is sure is that the explosion did not have the same effect on all those within its range.

Shaken and bruised, Shas considers itself the victim of a deliberate, dastardly act. The Likud was threatened, surveyed the damage, and, judging it was minimal, is now eager for a fight to settle accounts. Labor took cover and tried hard not to get involved in a shootout which could end what it hopes might still be a beautiful friendship with the intended targets. The National Religious Party is scared last traces of the powder be discovered on its hands, while Meretz gleefully lost no time in rushing to the sheriff, loudly clamoring that he send out the posse.

Shas really took the brunt of the assault. Because its leader Aryeh Deri has already had his run-ins with the law, he and his sidekicks fear that no one will believe them, that it has become all too easy to frame Deri.

Once Channel 1 lowered its sights last weekend and cautiously removed Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu from its hit list, Deri loomed largest on its wanted poster.

That may be why many in Shas say that he is not faking this time when he talks about quitting politics. Deri has in the past announced his impending departure but never rode off into the sunset, a fact which invited a cynical reception for his latest announcement. But Labor and Welfare Minister Eli Yishai attests that "Deri really took this to heart. Yes, he has a heart and

Shock waves from the Bar-On/Hebron scandal have been felt throughout the Knesset. But not all the parties will suffer equally, Sarah Honig reports

he has feelings and he has been under relentless fire for seven whole years. He just feels that he can't take any more, that no matter what happens in this country, his name is dragged into it as if he were evil personified. Even his enemies must stop and ponder whether this campaign of demonization has not reached grotesque proportions."

Be that as it may, Deri will not quit because his mentor Rabbi Ovadia Yosef forbids it. Yosef knows full well that without the dynamic, charismatic Deri, his movement will fade away. Deri really is indispensable to Shas.

'Deri has a heart and he has feelings and he has been under relentless fire for seven whole years. He just feels that he has had enough.'

—Labor and Welfare Minister Eli Yishai

and his legal travails have served to bestow upon him the aura of a martyr rather than to cause supporters to distance themselves. The fact that thousands of Shas faithful have begun reciting psalms for him daily speaks for itself.

So Deri may be personally despondent, but Shas may yet profit. MK Shlomo Benizri — the closest to a Deri competitor that Shas has produced — dared TV to "please produce just one little grain of the million tons of poured concrete of evidence they

claim to possess. I know they have nothing because I know no one instructed our ministers to support the Bar-On appointment in the cabinet and hence there was no possibility of a deal on the Hebron issue. Rabbi Yosef was even upset that our ministers did not consult him on the vote."

Yishai confirms this: "Were the nominee a leading anti-religious figure it would have been an issue for a party line. But as it was, we saw no need to oppose Bar-On. Besides, Deri could not have cooked up a plea bargain with Bar-On because such deals are made with the prosecutors and the police, with the assent of the judges in the case, and not so

screen in bold print — that "it is important to stress that in this affair Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu himself was not privy to the plea bargain Bar-On promised Deri."

Hasson sought to maintain that this is not tantamount to backtracking and doesn't detract from the importance and credibility of her story, but no one would buy this in the Likud, where there is no doubt that her real target was Netanyahu.

"TV luminaries excitedly talked about this story bringing the government down and about Watergate palling in comparison to Bibigate," said Likud Knesset faction chairman Michael Eitan.

"An investigation must be launched into who is responsible for the fact that Netanyahu's name was dragged into this, whether it was due to gross carelessness or to premeditated malice and why it took over 48 hours of mudslinging for the IBA to admit that Netanyahu is not involved in any conspiracy," he said.

Eitan continued to say that "it cannot be that these people treat the state microphone in their hands as a license to malign and insinuate at will and without impunity."

Gil Samsonov, the Likud's representative on the IBA board of directors, is taking the matter to the police and the state attorney.

"The very fact that TV changed its tune about the PM shows its story is false," he asserts. Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi demanded that "TV disclose all the evidence it claims to possess so that we can see if it is indeed a million tons of poured concrete or a micro-milligram of fiberglass."

Feeling vindicated and indignant, the Likud is now on the warpath, sure that retribution will at some point be exacted because this time TV crossed a thick red line. Netanyahu often charged that the IBA opposed his

election and couldn't reconcile itself to the result, so it had become the bon ton to snipe at him and even at his toddler sons. The IBA just did not know when to stop, those close to Netanyahu argue.

His spokesman Shai Bazak wants an apology, for "the fact that for two days state TV let the public understand that the prime minister is responsible for a horrid conspiracy described in mafia adjectives."

"That this went on without substantiation, and despite the most emphatic denials on our part, is no trifling matter that we can overlook. This is a criminal charge. But then suddenly,

'Please produce just one little grain of the million tons of poured concrete of evidence.'

—Shlomo Benizri

almost on the sly, they briefly note that Netanyahu was not involved. The least that could be expected is a public apology for a smear campaign of the worst sort. This will not be swept under the rug, forgotten and forgiven."

THE NRP is already quivering because of the Likud's vengeful fury. In the religious sector, the NRP has taken some hard knocks because of the prevalent speculation that it is either directly or indirectly responsible for the explosion. Being even remotely suspected of snitching will not earn it points in its constituency, especially as the upshot may be the weakening of the national camp's own government.

No matter what uncomfortable contortions the NRP performs, it cannot escape the fact that the story began with it.

On the day the Bar-On appointment was approved by the cabinet, reports say that the NRP was dissatisfied with the fact that Shas's ministers supported the appointment. The NRP was said to have hinted at prior coordination with Shas and to have accused Shas of selling out Hebron to ensure the appointment of Bar-On, who would obligingly help Deri. This was immediately featured in all the electronic and print media, including the *Post*.

The essence of Channel 1's scoop was not new. Hasson just embellished and elaborated on it. The question in the political arena is whether anyone whispered in her ear and let her in on real evidence or on mere innuendo.

Though Channel 1 prefers to gloss over the fact that the basic elements of its story were already out, the NRP is haunted by its "original sin." NRP MK Shaul Yahalom succeeded in bringing it back to the headlines when he couldn't resist a potshot at his arch party's foe. "Our ministers suspected at the cabinet session that a deal had been cooked up with Shas. Maybe they got some information that Shas wanted to gain something on the side. Our ministers are responsible level-headed people who do not invent things."

This was a headache Yahalom's party did not need. Shas grasped at the Yahalom utterance as further proof that the NRP is behind the row, but, worse still, Netanyahu put in a phone call to NRP leader Zevulun Hammer and asked for clarification.

In other words, he wanted to know on whose side the NRP was. Hammer quickly expressed regret over "Yahalom's unfortunate words. We opposed Bar-On not because we knew about a nefarious deal but only because we didn't know him," he rushed to explain. Political observers bet that after Shas, the most sleep is being lost by the NRP.

LABOR IS also trying hard to escape unpleasantness and with a

lot more success. As the antagonists prepared to draw their six-shooters, Labor prudently got out of the way. Considering its trigger-happy response team, it has remained inordinately pacifist throughout the entire blow-up. The candidates for party leadership said nothing at all for a long time and the present leader, Shimon Peres, explained that "there is no point in opening fire when we don't know the facts. If the police investigation finds that there really was such a conspiracy then we will let our outraged voices be heard. But what if it isn't so? Why stick our necks out? This is too serious a matter for knee-jerk reactions. We would do better to wait and see. No political or ideological differences exist here. It's best to evince a little sense and responsibility."

So much so that Peres even came out against a lukewarm Labor bureau resolution calling for an inquiry. There were some whispers around him that this is all due to the fact that he hasn't yet lost his hope of entering a national unity coalition, a move which will cement his stature as the Labor No. 1. For that he not only needs not to hit Netanyahu below the belt but most of all he cannot alienate Deri who controls 10 Knesset seats. Deri, despite his low spirits, still holds the key to any national unity move.

MERETZ CONSIDERS this another example of "the fact that Labor has not adjusted itself to its role in the opposition. They think they are still running things and they need to equivocate, explain, consider and refrain from vexing the religious parties. They must adhere to some unseen center and heaven forbid not veer to the left," as Yossi Sarid charges acerbically.

As soon as Sarid heard Channel 1's story, he speedily submitted a complaint to the police. "I know the TV story sounded unbelievable but we have seen so much that is unbelievable proven as real."

"This matter had to be acted upon, which is why I had to involve the police. We are not a milquetoast opposition like Labor. As I see it, our job is to take Bibi Netanyahu, pack him up and run him out of town."

Providing, of course, that the lawmen do not conclude differently and go after the hell-raisers instead.

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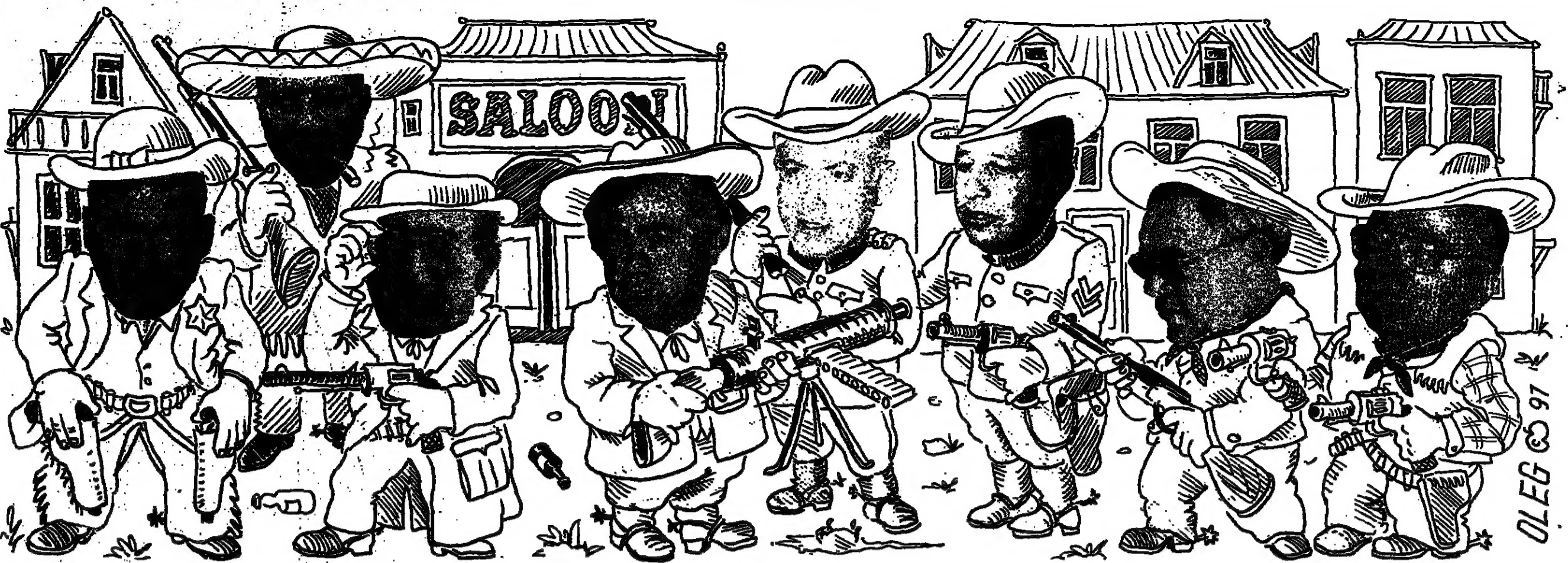
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Bar-On/Hebron Affair

eral Lieberman has denied all charges.

Police Inspector General said he will investigate all aspects, even if it takes him to the Prime Minister's Office.

Shas MK Channel 1 identified him as the mastermind of the Bar-On/Hebron deal. He is accused of having been involved in the investigation of the Hebron massacre, which was carried out by Bar-On's forces.

The Jerusalem Mayor was in the office when the deal was made, according to Hasson. The Jerusalem Municipality is currently investigating the matter.

The prime minister said in response to Hasson's report that the police should launch an investigation into her allegations. Netanyahu claims Deri never pressed for Bar-On's appointment as attorney general and that Channel 1 is just trying to discredit the Netanyahu government.

The Justice Minister, whose brief legal career was launched at Bar-On's firm where he did his articles, is one of the prime minister's closest proteges. He challenged Channel 1 to turn any and all evidence of a possible conspiracy over to the police's investigative committee.

A dyed-in-the-wool Likud activist and criminal lawyer. Was appointed earlier this month as attorney general, but resigned a day later after his appointment attracted scathing criticism from opposition leaders and the press.

He denies having struck any deal with Deri. Dan Avi-Yitzhak, Deri's attorney, refused the position of attorney general since he is still committed to defending Deri against long-standing charges of fraud. According to Hasson's allegations, Avi-Yitzhak opposed Bar-On's appointment as attorney general in a January 4 meeting with Netanyahu.

All eyes are on Channel 1

As the Bar-On/Hebron conspiracy idea continues to circulate, the role of the media may change from investigator to investigated, Michal Yudelman reports

The sparks are still showering in all directions from Channel 1's explosive story on the alleged political deal that swapped a vital Hebron vote for dumping Roni Bar-On in the attorney-general's chair. This is the domestic scandal that made it to the top of the international headlines and rocked Israeli politics to its foundations. It is being described as the biggest corruption scandal in the state's history, and the government hasn't seen the last of it. It is a story in the Woodward and Bernstein tradition, the "big one," every political journalist dreams of: corruption, conspiracy, cover-up, veiled threats and darker scheming. It led the BBC and US networks hourly news breaks for a day. It cracked in dozens of languages on radios worldwide from Oslo to India, Portugal to Kenya, and from the Gulf Arab states to North and South America. It started as the "Hebron/Bar-On"

affair but quickly turned into the Channel 1/government war. If the story is true, ministers and MKs agree the government may have to go. If it isn't, the television directors may start packing their bags. Israel Broadcasting Authority director-general Mordechai Kirschenbaum agreed he would have to resign if television bungled it. And he will not travel alone. But if it is true, it could mean the end of the government.

"COMPLETE NONSENSE, lies and deceit," was Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's first reaction when Channel 1 reporter Ayala Hasson broke her major scoop on January 22. Everyone concerned spluttered in total and indignant denial. A couple of days later the prime

minister demanded a thorough investigation. Sources from his office said he would not hesitate to accept a lie-detector test. This was retracted the next day by a statement: "The prime minister has no intention of taking any such test." Over the weekend, major cracks began to appear in the denial facade of those concerned. The cracks began to corroborate Hasson's story.

The most obvious was Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi's amended version. At first Hanegbi had given the cabinet the impression that the appointment was his idea. After the Channel 1 revelation, he "remembered" that the name was suggested to him by the Prime Minister's Office.

Then there was Deri's own statement recalling how he had objected to the nomination of his attorney, Dan Avi-Yitzhak, for the state post. He even "threatened" the director-general of the prime minister's office, Avigdor Lieberman, that if Avi-Yitzhak were chosen "you will have business with me." (This was afterwards described by Shas MK Shimon Ben-Zur as a friendly conversation.)

In addition, fellow Shas MK Aryeh Deri was quoted in last Friday's *Ha'aretz*, as saying that Likud activist David Appel had suggested Bar-On's name to him a long time before the appointment. Avi-Yitzhak confirmed that he had been offered the post. At the same time, *Yediot Aharonot* senior columnist Natan Barnea suggested the political rationale behind Bar-On's appointment and Shas's insistence on it, on the basis of his own independent sources.

All this was highly improper, certainly. But what about the crucial Hebron/Bar-On deal? Did Channel 1 have that "rock-hard" evidence which news director Rafik Halaby

assured us it had? And would Channel 1 expose its sources, violating that most sacred of the professional journalist's principles after truthful reporting?

Channel 1's directors and Hasson remain calm and confident. "We knew that if we bungled this, God forbid, we'd have to pay dearly, and we took that into consideration," Television Director-General Yair Stern said. "And believe me, we're not suicidal tendencies."

Hasson said "we checked and double-checked, not only me but my superiors as well. We knew the case would have to be capable of withstanding and winning a libel suit. Everything I reported was true."

At the same time, Channel 1 staff were rather baffled by the ambivalent reaction of the rest of the media to the television's mind-boggling scoop — a real Israeli Watergate.

On the one hand, admiration for Hasson was universal. On the other hand, it was not entirely untainted by professional jealousy. Some of her colleagues gave Hasson a reserved public pat on the back, then went on to chide Channel 1 for not providing more solid proof. They suggested the story should not have been published without such proof.

One reason for the sour grapes was that in some editorial offices,

the story of Hebron exchanged for Bar-On had been going around for some time but no one dared go public for lack of a visible smoking gun or sources who would come on record.

"We also had the story two weeks ago," Stern said. "But we didn't have the end of the thread. Last week Hasson got some sources which added crucial details and enabled us to run with it."

Instead of plunging into the public scandal with glee, the media

into the prime minister's involvement, or innocence, in the whole affair? And what was to be made of National Religious Party MK Shaul Yablon's statement that "we knew there was a conspiracy behind Bar-On's appointment" followed by his hurried retraction?

AS POLITICIANS indignantly clamored for Channel 1's sources, with the amazingly active support from some of the media, Channel 1 started feeling it had turned from investigator to investigated. It was Hasson and Halaby who became joint public enemies number one.

Netanyahu led the charge with a sweeping attack at the media in general, whom he accused (not for the first time) of being run by his political rivals. When he again threatened to privatize Channel 1, this time it was vendetta.

Halaby could hardly believe his ears. Only recently, on two separate occasions, Netanyahu had assured him that he believed Channel 1 to be the only reliable, fair and decent medium in the country. Netanyahu confirmed this on camera in a live interview with the channel's Ehad Ya'ari and Dan Semama last week in which he assailed "the media" but excluded Channel 1.

It is now feared in IBA that if the Bar-On scandal fails to pan out, Netanyahu, who has made no secret of his plans to liquidate Channel 1, will use the affair as an excuse to sell off the channel to a private owner sympathetic to government interests.

Deri and Lieberman, two of the strongest men in Israeli politics, followed the prime minister's lead in playing the victim, by whining on and on in Richard Nixon style about "their blood being let" by media leeches, of course.

On Channel 1's own *Popolitika*

talk show, Stern found himself attacked by panelist Tommy Lapid — a former director-general of the Israel Broadcasting Authority — and a number of others.

They erupted into hoarse shouts when Stern said if the court issues an injunction ordering television to reveal its sources, he would "consider further steps," rather than acquiesce.

"There is definitely a feeling we're being attacked," conceded Stern afterwards. "We are not the defendants or the criminals. The ones who made a shady deal were the politicians, not the media which exposed it."

"All these demands for our sources... A story like this cannot come from an open source. It can only come from someone who is not interested in coming out."

In the United States there was Watergate — not that I'm comparing. Today, 25 years later, they still don't know who "Deep Throat" was. The *Washington Post* has not revealed his or her name to this day. So did that stop the truth from coming out? No. Did that prevent Nixon from resigning? No.

Stern said the case may not even reach the stage in which the police ask the court for an order to Channel 1 to expose its sources. "The best detectives are onto it and they don't need our sources to reach the truth. All they need to do is question the people involved."

Policemen here are going crazy because they don't know what we have and what we don't. That's what's eating them. They don't care about the rule of law or proper conduct. All they care about is what we know, what we have on them.

"The story became so big that some fear the government is hanging in the balance, everyone's denying everything and there's a big mess."

All we need, advises Stern, "is a little patience. In the end the whole truth will come out. This I can assure you."

The bombshell in a nutshell

According to Channel 1 news reporter Ayala Hasson, Roni Bar-On's short-lived appointment as attorney-general was part of a deal made with Shas MK Aryeh Deri, who is on a long-running trial for corruption. Deri allegedly assured the cabinet of Shas's support for the Hebron agreement in exchange for a plea bargain in his trial. The plea bargain would get him off with a conviction "without disgrace" which would enable him to continue his political career and be a minister. The deal was allegedly concocted by the director-general of the prime minister's office Avigdor Lieberman, Deri, and the prominent Likud functionary and millionaire, David Appel. It is not clear at what stage Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu became familiar with the deal, if at all. According to the story, Appel was the one who proposed Bar-On to Deri, saying, "I have an attorney-general with wonderful qualities from our point of view." Deri then met Bar-On and the two sealed the pact. Deri informed Lieberman and Netanyahu that Shas would quit the government unless Bar-On was appointed. Netanyahu and Lieberman advised Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi that Bar-On was the preferred candidate. A few days before the Hebron agreement, Deri heard that Avi-Yitzhak was the prime minister's favorite candidate. He announced Shas's objection to the Hebron accord. Lieberman then hurried to Deri and promised again that Bar-On would be appointed. Shas removed its objection, the Hebron agreement and redeployment sailed through and Bar-On got his appointment. Briefly. M.Y.

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Letting them have their say

If Israeli emigrants are given the right to vote, they could play a crucial role in determining future election results. **Tom Tugend** in Los Angeles, **Marilyn Henry** in New York, **Douglas Davis** in London, and **Uriel Heilman** in Jerusalem report

Israeli emigres have greeted the prospect that they will be allowed to vote in their homeland's future elections with enthusiasm, ambivalence and opposition. Under a bill passed in its preliminary reading by a sharply divided Knesset, holders of valid Israeli passports will for the first time be able to cast their ballots abroad.

The best current data indicate that some 600,000 Israelis live outside the Jewish state. Roughly 350,000 of these would be eligible to vote, enough to fill between eight and 10 of the 120 Knesset seats. Knowledgeable observers believe that the majority of the expatriates, possibly up to 65 percent, would vote for the Likud and parties of the right, and it is not by coincidence that the Knesset bill, dubbed the Emigrants' Law, is being championed by the Likud while most on the left are bitterly opposed.

Yossi Beilin, a candidate for the Labor party leadership, said, "The cynicism of the ostensibly nationalist camp has reached new heights with a proposal which will allow former Israelis who abandoned us to send our children to the next war."

Jewish organizations in the US on the whole welcomed the proposal. "I'm not an Israeli; the elections are for Israelis to decide," said Leon Levy, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. "But if this means that we consider world Jewry as part of Israel, it's a good thing."

Shimon Erem, chairman of the Los Angeles Council of Jewish Organizations, was more assertive. "Just as Americans living in Israel vote in US elections, we should not be denied the right to take part in Israeli elections," he said.

Individual Israelis were more divided in their opinions about the prospect of gaining the right to vote. "We would like to state our opinion and that is the only way we can do it," said Asher Nazarian, a computer analyst from Jerusalem, now living in Fort Lee, New Jersey. "It's not that you are deciding for someone else what the political outcome of the election is going to be. You are deciding for yourself - maybe not for

the short run, but you are deciding the shape of your country."

But, Nazarian said, there should be a restriction on who should have the right to vote. "Maybe you could put a time limit on it - how long you have been away. Maybe someone who has been here for 30 years might be less interested in voting to begin with."

"I have mixed feelings, but overall I am against it," said Ari Aizer, a Jerusalemite living in Queens, New York. "I don't think it's really right if you don't live there. When there is an election, in my heart, I am eager to participate, but in my mind I say no."

He also raised the prospect that the legislation could potentially create a political power outside of Israel. "Israelis who live in New York could have their own party; they could get one or two mandates."

In Los Angeles, home to between 60,000 and 100,000 Israelis, reactions were also divided. Psychologist Isaac Berman said, "I am of two minds, because I would vote here as an American

Continued on Page 18

How other countries treat their expats

By TOM GROSS

Like Israel, Ireland has a large diaspora, a politically charged environment, and unresolved political problems of vital national importance. And like Israel, it has until now decided not to allow those outside the country to influence its future.

"At present the situation in the two countries is almost identical, in the sense that the only Irish citizens who can vote if they are not in Ireland on election day are diplomats and a select band of senior members of the army and navy," says Irish ambassador to Israel Brendan Scannell. "If someone goes on vacation on the day of the election, they can't vote."

Political pressure to change this state of affairs is growing, says Scannell. "I know of at least one group in the US dedicated to lobbying for the right of emigrants to vote."

About one million Irish-born citizens currently live out of Ireland (mostly in Britain and the US), compared to a population of about 4 million in the country. If the emigrants could vote they would potentially account for 20 percent of seats in the Irish parliament, the Dáil.

In addition, Ireland, like Israel, is very generous when it comes to granting citizenship - you only have to prove you have one Irish grandparent. This means that were citizens abroad given the vote, millions of people could potentially acquire citizenship, and tip the balance in some crucial future national election, for example one that plays a role in determining the future status of Northern Ireland.

Another country with a big diaspora, Italy, takes a similar approach: at present the five million Italians living outside Italy cannot vote, although there are "repeated ongoing attempts by parties of the right to

change the law," said one expert.

The United States, on the other hand, is extremely generous to those who have left its shores. In both federal and local elections, American citizens can vote wherever they are in the world. Whether they are on vacation, have lived abroad for 40 years, or have never even lived in the US, Americans cannot be disenfranchised. All they have to do is send an absentee ballot form to the Board of Elections in a state with which they can prove some ties. Depending on which state they choose, it may be as simple as showing they have a bank account, a mailing address, or a driving license in that state.

At around 40 percent, voter turnout among the three million US expats at presidential elections is not far short of turnout in the US, although the proportionately relatively small number of Americans living abroad means they are unlikely to have much impact on election results.

Continued on Page 18

To Russia with doubts

The departing Russian envoy is not entirely satisfied with the development of relations between his country and Israel, reports **Steve Rodan**

Alexander Bovin arrived in Tel Aviv more than five years ago convinced that Moscow's relationship with Israel could be a friendly one. Today, he is preparing to leave his post as the first Russian ambassador to this country with some regret that the friendship isn't warmer.

In the end, the 66-year-old Bovin says, some things are hard to change. "During my mission [1991-96], Russian-Israeli relations have moved from level zero up to a level one can consider normal," he says. "But not as one would like it to be. To my regret, one can still feel distrust accumulated for previous decades from both sides."

Amnon Sela, a Russian expert at Hebrew University, agrees. "The great Russian aliyah hasn't resulted in particularly warm relations," he says. "I am not saying there isn't positive expression but it is very roundabout. There is a large Russian community here but there hasn't been any sign in Russian-Israeli relations that both countries feel it is worth it."

Indeed, last May, Bovin told Jewish Agency chairman Avraham Burg that Moscow is not pleased with the efforts to encourage immigration from Russia. He said the emigration is causing a brain drain and urged Israelis to understand "the psychological difficulty that Russian residents feel amid the activities for the emigration of Jews - good and talented people that are leaving our country and are coming to Israel."

Diplomatic sources say Bovin has been disappointed with the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The hurt is personal. He honestly thought that the Likud government would accord him the same access that it does the ambassadors of the US and Egypt.

But the Russian ambassador was quickly disillusioned. Foreign Minister David Levy, soon after he entered office in June, met with US ambassador Martin Indyk and then Egypt's envoy Mohammed Bassiouny. Bovin waited impatiently for an appointment. He finally met Levy on September 3.

"It was a bad start for a new government," a diplomatic source says. "And don't forget Bovin is close to Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov."

The result is that Bovin does not feel much of a change in Russian-Israeli relations. Russian officials complained that during the tenure of Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, Moscow was dismissed as a factor in the Middle East. But has the Netanyahu government given Moscow the role it wants in the region?

"For the time being, I don't feel like it has," says Bovin. "However, the status of Moscow depends, first of all, on its own steps and its own policy."

The disappointment has extended to industrial cooperation as well. When Israel and Russia

exchanged ambassadors in 1991, both countries felt the sky was the limit. Russia had oil, Israel had food. Russia had the industrial base, Israel had the know-how in high-tech. Russia had access to the Third World markets, Israel had a base in the US.

The result was that trade steadily increased from \$44 million in 1992 to \$350 million in 1996, with Israel selling more than \$250 million to Russia. But Israelis quickly encountered problems in industrial cooperation. And Russia was deteriorating. There was political instability in Moscow and the legal system was collapsing.

The most promising area for the two countries was the aviation and defense industries. In 1992, Israel Aircraft Industries signed a contract with the Moscow-based Russian jet manufacturer Ya'acov Lev, for the design and production of a business jet called Galaxy.

The Israeli role was the dominant one. It would design the jet and supply the avionics. The Russian role was to supply the fuselage, an important system but not something that would involve advanced technology.

It didn't work. Ya'acov Lev pumped out MiG jets in the 1970s and 1980s but in the 1990s the company was floundering. "They couldn't perform what they promised," a defense industry

by refusing to participate in the Russian initiative to stop the fighting in

Israeli officials say they see the positive side of relations. They say Russian-Israeli ties have become more intense, particularly with the Netanyahu government. They point to last October's visit of Primakov to Israel. Both Russian and Israeli officials agreed the visit improved relations between

Lebanon, a n d belat.

Bovin: To my regret, one can still feel distrust.

(Uri Koren)

source recalls. "Their problem is organization, doing things on time. They just weren't reliable."

"I don't think they're ready for commercial ventures," an industry source says. "It's not that they're not capable. The bottom line is that until you have a deal you don't have a deal."

IAI and Ya'acov Lev had an amiable parting and the Israelis formed a partnership with the Chicago-based Pritzker Group. But Israeli executives drew a lesson. The Russians were not ready for commercial business, particularly in the West.

INSTEAD, ISRAEL has tried to work with Russia in other areas of the world. One project is to supply China with an upgraded Russian Ilyushin 76 early-warning jet. Beijing insisted on the Ilyushin because of its Soviet-based air force.

Again, there are problems. Despite what the Israelis insist are pledges that date back to 1995, Moscow has not approved the transfer of the jet. Meanwhile, a \$250 million deal remains suspended.

"This is at the top of our agenda in Russian-Israeli relations," a defense official says.

Privately, Israeli defense sources say the reason might be political. They trace the opposition from Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov, who arrived in Israel last April during Operation Grapes of Wrath. Then-prime minister Shimon Peres offended Primakov

by agreeing to see him. "He's still angry about that," a defense source says.

For his part, Bovin is cryptic. "I was not involved in the negotiations on this theme," he says.

The ambassador pleads ignorance on Israel-Russia efforts at defense cooperation. He recalls the December 1995 memorandum of defense cooperation that called for exchanges of military delegations and joint ventures in marketing weapons to other countries. Since then, Israeli officials have tried to interest their Russian counterparts in joint ventures to upgrade MiGs around the world.

"We spoke to them several times about this and they never got back to us," a defense source says.

"In the field of weapons cooperation, there isn't much we can buy from them," Hebrew University's Sela says. "We don't have anything to buy. Maybe they can use hi-tech from us."

"Israel is very developed in industry, even compared to Russia," he adds. "Russia does not produce products for a country like Israel. It produces a lot of raw material. There isn't a lot we can work on."

An analyst on the Russian arms industry, who did not want to be identified, agrees. He says that many in the Russian industries, which became the biggest arms exporter in 1996, feel they can go it alone. "If one were to be able to put together Chinese financing, Russian air frames and Israeli technology systems, that would be one terrific plane," the analyst says. "The problem is making the collaboration work. It's definitely a political problem. The military industry people come from a certain background. We've always been the enemy. The shift is hard. It's hard to make a collaboration with the Israelis. It's psychologically hard."

For his part, Bovin is extremely vague on the level of Russian defense cooperation with Israel. "I suppose you mean the memorandum on mutual aid," he says. "The exchange of military delegations provided in it is developing in accordance to the plans."

the two countries. The following month Primakov acknowledged this in an interview with the Russian news agency Interfax. He compared the Netanyahu government, which he said, "doesn't close its eyes [to Moscow's role in the Middle East]" to that of the previous Labor government, which "knowingly ignored this."

At the same time, the officials are concerned over Russia's votes in the UN, which they say reflect the automatic support Moscow provided the Arabs during the Cold War. "There have been a series of votes on issues that we term anti-Israel and which affects the peace process," an official says. "Russia is a co-sponsor of the Middle East process. It has relations with lots of nations in the area."

Another concern is Russia's sale of weapons to what the US terms the rogue regimes of the Middle East. Iran is the best example. Moscow is selling Teheran nuclear technology. Russia also recently delivered the last of three Kilo-class submarines to Iran.

As Primakov put it in a December visit to Tehran, "Iran is an important country, and in light of the high level of trust between the two countries, Russia will act to integrate it into the international community as a full partner with equal rights."

Russian officials say Israel is being disingenuous. On the one hand Israel has protested Moscow's sales to the Middle East as unbecoming for a sponsor of the peace process. On the other hand, the government, including that of Netanyahu, keeps Russia at arm's length. During the visit of Russian deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posvalnik to Jerusalem, officials requested that his country focus on the multilateral talks rather than on bilateral peace efforts.

SO, IS Russia returning to be a political ally of the Arab states as witnessed by its statements and votes in the UN? "Russia in no sense is returning to be a political ally of the Arab states," a defense official says.

Continued on Page 12

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AGAINST THE GRAIN



By HILLEL FALKIN

There is, you may have noticed, something wildly paradoxical in the debate over extending voting rights to Israelis living abroad, which passed its first reading in the Knesset last week.

Normally, you would expect the post-Zionist left to be for such a law and the paleo-Zionist right to be against it, no?

After all, the logic is simple. In most post-nationalist countries, like Holland or France, such absentee balloting is taken for granted. Since Americans and Frenchmen see nothing wrong or reprehensible in some of their compatriots living abroad, they do not bar them from taking part in elections. Why penalize people for doing what they have every right to do?

If one thinks of such countries as models for Israel, there seems no reason not to follow them. And conversely, if one thinks of Israel as a special case — if it remains the Zionist duty of its citizens, and perhaps of Jews everywhere, to live in it — absentee voting is absurd, a rewarding and legitimization of gross irre-

Dealing with those who want out

sponsibility.

In reality, of course, the right supported the law in order to increase the electoral proportion of Jews to Arabs and thereby decrease the demographic specter of annexing part or all of the Palestinian territories, whereas the left opposed it because it did not want the argument against annexation to be weakened.

From such a perspective, it hardly matters one way or another. Nobody knows exactly how many holders of active Israeli passports are currently living outside of Israel. But if one assumes that there are less than a million of them; that many are children who could not vote anyway; that tens of thousands are Arabs; and that the turn-out of yordim in any election would almost certainly be low, their numbers could not seriously offset several million annexed Palestinians. The demographic specter will remain even if, every four years, Israeli ballot boxes are put on all the street corners of New York and Los Angeles.

And yet the question of how to think and feel about yordim is far from academic. It touches every one of us. In a country at least 10% of whose population has left

it over the years, there is no one living here who doesn't have ex-Israeli friends or family members residing more or less "permanently" abroad. How we relate toward them differs with who they are and who we are; it tells us something about how we feel toward this country and about our being here.

For a long time, in my first years in Israel, every act of *yerida* by someone I knew seemed to me a personal betrayal. Perhaps "personal" isn't quite the right word, because I didn't necessarily miss the people in question once they had taken off for America or wherever. But they had run off and left me holding the bag as surely as if they had jumped ship from a vessel we both were sailing on, or made off with the assets of a company we were partners in. From now on, I would have to do more days in the army because of them, since there would be fewer of us to spread it out on; pay more taxes; stand more alone within the gates.

The years were war years; there was a feeling of a country under siege; every desertion, so it felt, left one weaker. Psychologically, too, I was new in Israel, still an immigrant. Not that I had any

doubts about being here ... but nevertheless ... there were moments when one wondered ... or found oneself fantasizing about the life one would be leading if ... and at such times whoever absconded took a little bit of one's carefully composed certainty with them.

Today, when the feeling of siege has lifted, and Israel is quite simply home, and there is no longer any alternate fantasy life that attacks from behind in nagging moments because the years in which it might have been lived are gone forever, you would think all that would be a thing of the past.

BUT THE other night I was over at an old friend's house, having a drink. We talked politics for a while. Gingerly. We used to see eye-to-eye on them. We didn't anymore, not since I accused him of moving to the left after Oslo and I moved to the right. (Actually, it seemed to me that I had remained in the center, right where I always had been, but suddenly he was no longer there beside me.) Since then it's been a painful subject. Before long he changed it.

"You know C?" he asked. (He used her full name, of course, not

just her initial.)

"Sure," I said. We all live in the same town.

"You know her son?"

"Yes. He just got out of the army, didn't he?"

"He is in Miami right now. C. told me that her husband sent him a fax this week not to come back."

"Why, what happened?" I asked.

"What did the boy do?" It had to be something pretty terrible for a father to act like that.

My friend poured himself another brandy. "He didn't do anything. His parents have decided to join him in Miami. They've put their house up for sale."

"Damm them, I thought. Which was odd, because I don't know either C. or her husband very well and have never had the slightest personal relationship with either of them."

"How come?" I asked.

"No special reason. C. says they've had enough. They've paid their dues. They want out."

I watched his knuckles tighten around his glass.

"Damm them," he murmured. "I poured myself another drink too. 'Well, cheers.' I said. I hadn't felt so close to him since Oslo."

A VIEW FROM NOV



By MOSHE KOHN

Mr. Shapiro or Mr. Rapoport, whose names I do not necessarily proclaim a "priestly connection," as do Cohen or Kagan, comes to the rabbinic with his bride-to-be to register for marriage. She is a divorcee, or a convert to Judaism, or the daughter of proselytes.

If the marriage registrar is at all familiar with Jewish onomastics, he is sure to tell prospective groom Shapiro/Rapoport to prove he isn't a *kohen*, a scion of the priestly line founded by Aaron, Moses' brother. Of course, if the bride-to-be is a divorcee, the prospective groom will have to prove this regardless of his surname.

That is because people called Shapiro are "under suspicion" of belonging to the distinguished and prolific Kahana-Shapiro clan, who are *kohanim*, as the first element of that name indicates: the Aramaic form of the Hebrew *kohen*.

People called Rapoport (in its various spellings) are similarly "suspect," for the name originates with the 16th-century Rabbi Avraham Menachem Hakohen Rapa, of Porto, Italy. His escutcheon, in Hebrew, speaks of "Rapa of Porto," which were combined into the surname we

The kohen in the chromosome

know.

And the Halacha, the biblical/talmudic law that is the exclusive authority here in matters pertaining to marriage and divorce, forbids a *kohen* to marry a divorcee.

Of course, not all people bearing those names are scions of Aaron. Neither are all Cohens, Kogans, Kagens, Kaplans, Kates, Azoulay, or Mazehs — all names suggesting Aaronide lineage.

Cohen, variously rendered also as Cohn, Cone, Coen, Kahan, Kahn and Kohn (to mention only a few of the variations), is simply a transliteration of the Hebrew title. It is the most common surname in Israel (see *Onomastica Canadensis*, Vol. 74, Nos. 1 & 2 [hereafter OC], two-part article by Charles Kormos, Beth Hachofetz research; Edward D. Lawton, professor emeritus of psychology, State University of New York/Fredonia; and Joseph Ben Brit, Hibbat Zion).

Kogan and Kagan are Russian for Cohen and Kahan, respectively; that language has no "h" sound, replacing it with the hard "g." Kaganoff and Kaganovich are Slavic for "son of a *kohen*." (The Irish name [George M.] Cohan is the English transliteration of the Gaelic Keoghane.)

Kaplan (rank 121 in OC) is Polish for priest. (But when George and Betsy Kaplan of Jerusalem were in Istanbul and checked the telephone directory for possible relatives, they found many Kaplans... with given names like Ismet, Kemal, Tahsin.

It transpired that Kaplan is a popular Turkish surname, meaning "tiger," like the Arabic name Nimr.)

Katz (9) is the acronym for the Hebrew *kohen izdek*, meaning "authentic kohen," as distinguished from those who in certain periods of Jewish history were known or thought to have faked Aaronide ancestry or usurped the high-priesthood. Curiously, I had never heard of a non-Ashkenazi Katz till I met a Yemenite in Jerusalem bearing that name.

Azoulay (11), borne by *kohanim* of Moroccan provenance, is presumably the acronym of the passage in Leviticus 21:7: "*isha zona vahalala lo yikahlu* [They [kohanim] shall not take a harlot or a *halala* (woman profaned) — the latter is a woman born of certain unions disqualifying her from marrying an Aaronide. OC supports this view but suggests other possibilities: the name stems from the Middle Ages Berber *izil* (good); it is linked to the names of the localities Tazula or Asilah/Ziliz or to a Hispano-Chaldean root meaning bluish; it refers to blue eyes.

Mazeh is the acronym of the Hebrew *Mizera Aharon hakohen* "of the seed of Aaron the priest."

There are also such obviously Aaronide names as Aroonstam and Konstamm, the Germanic suffixes meaning "of the line of."

There are many other Aaronide names, and variations of them. As noted, however, not every Cohen etc. is a *kohen*. Many of them were arbitrarily given their names by immigration clerks who had no

patience for their unpronounceable and unspellable Slavic names. Some adopted those names, without regard for their *kohanic* implications, because they liked the sound of them or their aristocratic link, or as abbreviations of their complicated Slavic names.

LET'S RETURN to our prospective bridegroom and the "suspicion" that he is a *kohen* about to take a forbidden woman.

Some sectors of the Jewish world and of the community of bio-genetic research are agog over the findings of a study conducted by an Israeli-English-Canadian-American team of researchers.

Examining 188 Ashkenazi, Sephardi and Yemenite men in those four countries, the researchers found that those claiming to be *kohanim* share a certain feature in their Y chromosome that is not present in non-Aaronides (Prof. Michael Hammer, *January's Nature* magazine; Judy Siegel, *The Jerusalem Post*, January 3; Marit Slavin, *Ha'aretz*, January 6; Denise Grady, *Los Angeles Jewish Journal*, January 17-23).

So we may now be at a point where the rabbinic marriage registrar will order the bridegroom to go to a laboratory to have a smear taken of the saliva in his cheek, so his non-*kohanic* claim may be verified by a DNA check.

The converse is also possible: those now qualifying for the few remaining post-Temple *kohanic* privileges or duties — called first

to the reading of the Torah and to carry the Torah in the Simhat Torah festivities; standing before the congregation and pronouncing the Priestly Benediction; leading the *Birkat Hamazon* after a meal; officiating at the *Pidyon Haben* (Redemption of the Firstborn Son) ceremony — may now be required to produce a certificate of Aaronic DNA.

Hammer, a geneticist at London's University College and the University of Arizona, told Grady that at this point the test could suggest that the man is a *kohen* but not prove it, and it could rule out the possibility with a high degree of certainty.

Not coincidentally, the man who initiated the study is himself an Aaronide, bearing an un-*kohanic* Polish surname: Prof. Karl Skorecki (pronounced Skorezki), senior nephrologist at Haifa's Rambam Hospital and head of the department of molecular medicine at the Technion's medical school.

He told Judy Siegel the idea came to him in the synagogue, when he saw another *kohen* being called up to the Torah, and wondered at the fact that although presumably of common ancestry, he and the man don't look alike.

Meanwhile, halachically, today's *kohanim* are only presumed Aaronides. Tradition has it that when Prophet Elijah comes to proclaim the Messianic Era, he will bring a list of the authentic *kohanim*.

Dry Bones



FUNDS



By BEVERLY BLACK

Winter has come with a vengeance. After weeks of "Indian summer" which resulted in prayers all around for rain, winter has now arrived with snow on the Hermon, floods in the Negev and dinghies rescuing stranded motorists in Ra'anana and Herzliya.

For fortunate people like most of our readers, we take winter in our stride by getting out a few more sweaters and our rubber boots and turning up the heating.

But give a thought to the large poverty-stricken family whose winter boots are paper thin or the elderly who have only one thin blanket and no money for heating oil. These are the people that your fund collects money for and who benefit from your generous donations.

I'm sorry to say the dwindling donations do not bode well for those who are looking to our funds for assistance. If contributions don't pick up for all three funds, there won't be enough money to supply heaters, blankets etc. for the elderly, toys, physical fitness equipment, clothing and shoes for the youngsters and scholarships to help worthy students without means to pay the university tuition.

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SHABBAT SHALOM



By SHLOMO RISKIN

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shall you labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God."

(Ex. 20:8-10)

What would happen if one of the religious parties was in a position to lead a coalition government? Would "Rabbi Khomem" set up moral squads to separate amorous couples, open prisons for those who mix meat and milk, and mete out corporal punishment for Sabbath desecrators?

Secular Israel need not fear a religious state. In the words of my mentor, Rav J.B. Soloveitchik, religious activity and coercion are mutually exclusive.

Nonetheless, a midrashic interpretation of a verse in this week's portion of *Parashat Terumah* seems to lead to the opposite conclusion: "And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and

they stood at the foot of the mountain" (Ex. 19:17). R. Abdimi b. Hama b. Hasa comments that the verse comes to teach us that God picked up the mountain and held it over our heads like a barrel. "If you will accept the Torah — good; if not, there shall be your burial" (B.T. *Shabbat* 88a).

The plain meaning of the biblical text portrays God entering into a covenant with the children of Abraham only after we declared: "We shall do and we shall obey [na'aseh v'nishma]." Does't R. Abdimi's interpretation contradict this description?

Rav Soloveitchik is obviously disturbed by the ramifications of this midrash. In a footnote on one of the passages in his novella *The Lonely Man of Faith*, this great talmudic sage maintains that the biblical description is dealing with a general acquiescence to Five by Divine will; the talmudic addition of coercion refers to the details of the religio-legal structure.

In order to understand this position, it is important to study a passage in Maimonides' *Code of Jewish Law* pertaining to divorce.

Maimonides rules that if a man is ordered by a Jewish court to grant his estranged wife a

divorce, but refuses to do so, "he may be forced [physically and/or emotionally] until he says 'I want to.'" But if a divorce must be given of the husband's free will, how is it possible to allow him to be beaten until he agrees?

Maimonides goes on to explain that since this man "wants to be part of Israel and to keep all the commandments and to keep away from transgressions, and it is only his evil inclination which is getting the better of him... it is considered as if he divorced his wife of his own free will."

Using terminology from the Zohar, Rav Kook interprets these words in terms of a "lower will" and a "higher will." An individual who is on a diet, for example, and is offered chocolate-cream pie, might well say: "My lower will wants it, but my higher will does not." Similarly the husband may try to keep the wife even against her will, but the court knows that the individual's higher will wants to do what is right.

Using this idea, one might fear that when it comes to keeping the Sabbath under a Torah-majority government, the ruling party might argue that the cinemas must all be closed on Friday evenings. When a large group complains, the response would be: "Ah, but that

is your lower will; your higher will really wants to go to synagogue!" But this hardly takes into account the democratic rights of a minority.

R. Meir Simcha of Dvinsk, a great commentator at the end of the last century, interprets Maimonides' reasoning in a different way. As Rabbi Eugene Korn points out, the very words of Maimonides limit the exercise of coercion to those who announce that they are observant. This reading creates a new category between the religious and the non-religious: those who identify themselves with tradition and seek help if they should fall.

In the world at large, this is exactly how we live. Assume for a moment that I'm caught speeding. A natural tendency might be to try to get out of the ticket by coming up with all sorts of stories. But no one in his right mind would argue that he is opposed to the entire system of traffic laws, that it is everyone's democratic right to drive as quickly as possible. It is assumed that whoever applies for a driver's license accepts the traffic laws, for everyone's good, including his own.

We constantly witness how laws intervene if actions endanger others. This is the unspoken

agreement between all members of society. But when it comes to areas of ritual between man and God, any enforced action will only empty the deed of any semblance of Divine service.

Only for those who privately and publicly accept the entire system of Divine commandments and rabbinic interpretation, and who are desirous of a punitive structure to help keep them on the "straight and narrow," does any kind of external regulation begin to make sense.

This is the point Rav Soloveitchik makes when he interprets the talmudic commentary that the Jews were forced to accept Torah as relating to the details after the general structure had been freely accepted by them.

Hence Maimonides ruled that only an individual who has publicly declared his desire to observe all the commandments can be rabbinically coerced into willingly presenting a bill of divorce to his estranged wife. Hence any modern government would be entitled to punish for traffic violations but not for Sabbath desecration.

For Sabbath observance, one must be convinced, not coerced.

Shabbat Shalom

**WET
ROADS!
DRIVE
SLOWLY!**

GRAPEVINE

The mayor of what????

By GREER FAY CASHMAN

Freudian slip. Hadassah past president Bernice S. Tannenbaum, in welcoming former Jerusalem mayor Teddy Kollek to the inaugural ceremony of Hadassah's Women of Distinction awards, referred to him as "the former mayor of Hadassah."

HONOREES IN the Hadassah awards brought members of their families to the presentation ceremony, which explains the presence of the president of the state, who this time was relegated to the audience, while his wife, Reuma Weizman, the first of the recipients, sat on stage. Weizman, who was singled out for setting an example in volunteerism through her work with Micha, Yad Sarah and other organizations, grew up in a Hadassah ambience. Her late mother, Rachel Schwartz, was recruited in the 1920s by Hadassah founder Henrietta Szold. After Weizman completed her response to the award, her husband bounded on stage to give her a big kiss, then turned to the large gathering and said "Soon, I will have spent 47 years with my wife and that's a story in itself, the book of which she may write."

FOR SOME people, life begins at 40, and for others it continues well past 80. Case in point is Abba Eban, who celebrates his 82nd birthday this coming Sunday. Eban is still in frequent demand on

both the lecture and television appearance circuits. The former foreign minister's principal assignment, the PBS film on the peace process, with a planned premiere for November, already has the promised participation of King Hussein, Hosni Mubarak, Yasser Arafat and Shimon Peres. In a typical Ebanism, he has termed the Oslo accord as "one of the wonders of the world - conceived by Labor and born with the indispensable aid of Likud midwives." Eban is also a major player in the BBC six-part series on the Arab-Israeli conflict which is currently under production, and will be the central figure in a biographical study of himself by the company that produced the Einstein TV movie.

His book on *Diplomacy after the Cold War* is due for release later this year and will be a follow-up to his best-selling *The New Diplomacy*. Henry Kissinger, with whom Eban meets frequently, has told him "it's very intelligent to write about the future because there is nothing on the ground to refute what one writes."

LABOR CHAIRMAN Peres, who gave the closing address to the Hadassah mid-winter convention, must have squirmed at the inaccuracies read out in his lengthy CV. When it was finally his turn to speak, Peres apologized for having "such a thing biography" which took "such a long time to describe."

After sharing his view of the future of the country, Peres said that he



Mazal Gibli, the former housekeeper of David Ben-Gurion, celebrates the wedding of her grandson, author Raz Nadav, along with his bride, film animator Lena Kleiner. (Sivan Peres)

would entertain questions, but no one raised her hand to ask about either peace or education, which were his two key themes. It was quite a change from the Saturday night session on pluralism when

delegates kept firing questions at the speaker till almost midnight, and might have gone on indefinitely had they been permitted.

WHEN SHE arrived home on a

visit earlier this month, Ofra Haza expressed the wish to cut a new album here. But now she's doing better than that; she's starring in a new Israeli movie *Absolute Justice*, which is based on the subject of Yemite infants who disappeared without trace in the early years of the state. The choice of Haza as the big international name in the film's list of credits is particularly apt, since she herself is of Yemite origin. Shooting is due to start next month.

IN THE 20 years in which she served as housekeeper to Paula and David Ben-Gurion, Mazal Gibli got to know many of the country's movers and shakers and maintained contact with them long after she stopped working for Israel's first prime minister. Some of them, including Esther Rubin, Gibli's former employer of 20 years from whom the Ben-Gurions "stole" her services, were among the huge crowd invited to the Gan Oranim wedding of her grandson, author Raz Nadav, to film animator Lena Kleiner. Conspicuous by his absence was Shimon Peres, who makes a point of responding favorably to nearly all of Gibli's invitations. A previous commitment abroad forced him to give this one a miss.

IN AN exclusive interview with Dan Rather on CBS, grieving father Bill Cosby, whose son Ennis was murdered in Los Angeles earlier this month, admitted to marital infidelity but denied a paternity claim by his former lover.

WHAT DO Bruce Willis, Liam Neeson, Matthew McConaughey, Sean Connery and Richard Gere have in common? All were approached to star in Universal's upcoming remake of *The Day of the Jackal*. Each declined for a variety of reasons, but in the final analysis, Willis, who was the initial choice reconsidered, and decided that he could reshuffle his other commitments.

ALMOST AS zany off screen as on, Bette Midler, one of the stars of *First Wives Club*, tells the story of how she once backed into her boyfriend's mother's car because she thought it was his. When her panic-stricken boyfriend informed her that his mother had no insurance, Midler's typical rejoinder was "That's tough."

THE WEEK THAT WAS

If one little leaker should accidentally fall...

By MICHAEL YUDELMAN

As the nation speculated who might be the "deep throat" who tossed TV Channel 1 the juicy bone of the Rami-Ron-On-for-Hebron Shas-swap, an interesting sidelight on the mystery flickered briefly in a corner of the presidential residence.

After the judges' inauguration ceremony at Beit Hanassi, three journalists struck up a chummy chat with Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi.

One of them, *The Jerusalem Post's* Batsheva Tsur, asked the minister who, in his opinion, might possibly be the secret source of the government-shaking story.

Hanegbi answered with a wide grin: "Well, only four people were at the meeting where the Bar-On appointment was discussed. So, you have four possibilities. The prime minister obviously would have no interest in leaking it, nor does his director-general Avigdor Lieberman. So unless you think it was me, it must have been Attorney Dan Avidi-Yitzhak."

Tsur: "I then asked Justice Ministry spokeswoman Etti Eshed whether I had heard correctly and she confirmed what Hanegbi had said, but she added it was merely background material which should be attributed only to a government source."

Later that evening, Tsur called Hanegbi himself to re-confirm. "At this point he said 'I was just kidding.'"

This poses the question of just how seriously a journalist should take the minister's jokes.

Tsur then spoke to Avidi-Yitzhak. He said he did not want to comment at that moment but "the truth will come out."

HOUSEKEEPING

Knesset Speaker Dan Tichon hastily denied reports that he hired the Gitan/BBDO advertising company to improve the Knesset's image, after receiving a shower of angry reactions.

Many people called to remind Tichon that Gitan's media whiz Moshe Teomim had served as Peres's image adviser in the elections, and we all know what became of that.

You got it all wrong, said Tichon, noting that he had indeed met Teomim, but only as part of a series of talks with media advisers to find out why the Knesset's image isn't improving. Maybe someone should tip off the speaker that the spin doctors don't have much chance of sprucing up the Knesset's image while its members seem intent on going in the opposite direction.

"A thousand image consultants won't be able to improve the Knesset's image," said Labor's Dalia Izik. She pointed out that the Knesset, emasculated by the personal elections for prime minister, has lost almost all its power. As long as the prime minister shows contempt for the House and

hardly goes there if he can help it, the situation will only get worse.

"If the goods are bad, they will be impossible to market," stated Likud's MK Ruby Rivlin. Meretz's MK Yossi Sarid added: "As long as the bad apples are on top, it will be difficult to sell the whole box. If the rotten ones are removed, there will be no need for public relations to sell the parliamentary merchandise."

And how can public sympathy for MKs be tapped as long as they cut themselves off from the real world of the citizens' problems and continue to fatten their own pay packets?

Tichon's urge for a PR fix, it has been suggested, arises from the Knesset's emergence from recent events smelling of something not quite roses.

One was the invasion of the House by Channel 2 comedian Eli Yatzpan, who asked the MKs questions as part of his Friday night comedy act. Another was that irksome decision by MKs to raise their own salaries.

Another contribution came from the exposure of the rather costly renovations in the chambers of the Speaker himself - something in the NIS 120,000 ball park, plus or minus dilly dally. But who's counting anymore!

DUST BITERS

Benyamin Netanyahu's office deserves its own book of records for short-lived appointments. No, not the six-hour attorney-general time, but this week his bureau chief, Brig. Gen. (res.) David Agmon, announced his resignation, and bit the dust after three months in the job.

"I've had it with them," he said succinctly, "they're impossible to work with." Agmon, the equivalent of the mighty Eitan Haber in the late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin's bureau, found himself cut off from the political center and the decision-making by Netanyahu's aides Danny Naveh, Avigdor Lieberman and others. Even the prime minister's schedule and appointments diary, his main duty, was taken beyond his grasp by the chief secretary, Rahama Avraham.

Among other appointments which haven't worked out - Bar-On of course, Ya'acov Ne'eman as justice minister, Jacob Frenkel as finance minister, attorney Avi Halevy as office legal adviser, and David Ivri as head of the still-born national security council. Two others in the bureau, Rami Simso, Netanyahu's adviser on Arab affairs, and Shmuel Cohen, a political adviser, are departing soon.

Former Tsomet director-general, Doron Shmueli, was offered Agmon's job. But his candidacy immediately swam under a cloud when it became known that he is among those suspected of illegally pulling confidential documents out of the military archives for possible use against political rivals.

RUSSIA

Continued from Page 10

ally of the Arab states," said Bovin. "Our voting in the UN is not determined by 'returning to Arabs.' It is determined by the Russian Foreign Ministry in accordance with our understanding of the situation in the Middle East."

"It would be naive, to say the least, to demand from Moscow to see the world with the eyes of Israelis or Arabs. Neither the former nor the latter have their own monopoly on justice. That's why there is neither a need for offense nor for hysteria. But there is a need for constructive dialogue which would help to understand different points of view. As for Russia, it is open for such a dialogue."

And how does Bovin explain Russia's policy of selling nuclear equipment, missiles and submarines to Iran? Is this a way to gain influence in the region, or will Russia sell to anyone who pays cash? "Russia needs money. This motive is, at the present moment and in this given case, the chief one," claims Bovin. "Certainly, we are taking into account not only sums in cash but political factors too. But Russia has no interest in destabilizing the situation in the Near and the Middle East."

REGARDING DOMESTIC issues, Israeli police sources say that over the past three years suspected Russian mobsters have found a safe haven in Israel. "I have not received from Moscow

any direction about these 'Russian mobsters,'" says Bovin. "And principally, I can say nothing. This is a question of fact. Are there really such mobsters in Israel or not? All my attempts to find out this fact from different Israeli organizations have not succeeded."

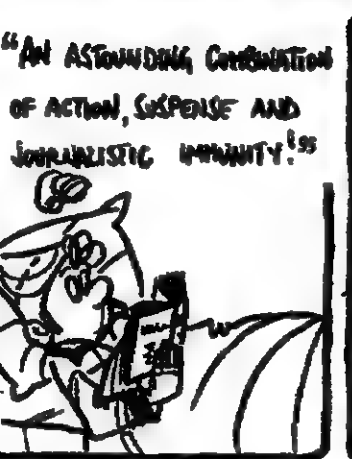
Still, Bovin is preparing to leave Israel amid a flurry of diplomatic activity. Netanyahu is planning to visit Russia in March and Russian diplomats say that some of the outstanding bilateral issues - such as the release of the Ilyushin cargo plane to China - will be resolved. That will be followed by a visit to Moscow by IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Amnon Shahak.

Bovin accepts, with equanimity, his return to Moscow, where his replacement, an Arabic-speaking diplomat, awaits approval from President Boris Yeltsin. "Everything has its beginning and everything has its end," he says. "I have spent enough time in this country. Usually one loses a charm of novelty, a freshness of perception. Without this, the work turns into routine and everyone is bored."

"And besides, I have passed the age of pension. I should make way for those younger than myself."

Bovin's most striking impressions of Israel are that practically everywhere he goes "I can speak Russian, and, secondly, the people, who for very understandable reasons can hardly have a tender affection for Russia, do continue to regard their 'prehistoric mobsterland' as their own mother. Here, psychology 'turns out' to be stronger than logic or politics."

SRULIK



by DOSH

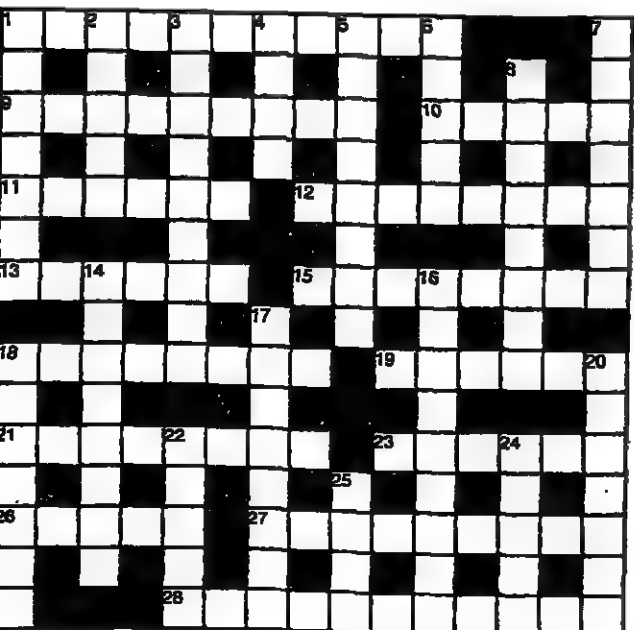
CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Just the right thing to take! (11)
- 8 Stirring articles are written about soapstone! (9)
- 10 Exciting start made by five in French street to produce theatrical work (5)
- 11 Finishes the Spanish fuel (6)
- 12 Cooking utensil found on American football field (8)
- 13 Commendation produced quiet increase in salary (6)
- 15 In a hurry to make some notes about a bird (8)
- 18 Terrible actors took 99 attempts at the word puzzle (8)
- 19 Listen in on small insect (6)
- 21 Puts in a thousand vegetables perhaps (8)

DOWN

- 2 Disorganized engineer involved in poor work, but he does produce a barrel (6)
- 26 Aegean islands are first class - no one returns (5)
- 27 Harem slave found squalid mess, and opposite extremes (9)
- 28 Silverstrian arrangement is of little importance (11)
- 1 Bill and Edward got out of bed and behaved badly (5,2)
- 2 Sounds like a bit of tranquillity (5)
- 3 Harem slave found squalid mess, and opposite extremes (9)
- 4 Space to tie up (4)
- 5 Take away something that isn't concrete (8)



SOLUTIONS

YESTERDAY'S QUICK SOLUTION
ACROSS: 1 Larders, 5 Mayon, 8 Basic, 9 Opulent, 10 Lollard, 11 Lodge, 12 Banger, 14 Intact, 17 Sling, 19 Wreakle, 20 Overcast, 23 Yacht, 24 Eased, 25 Holiday.
DOWN: 1 Libel, 2 Upbeat, 3 Ditch, 4 Shoddy, 5 Mandala, 6 Yield, 7 Retreat, 13 Besspoke, 15 Egghead, 18 Aboard, 19 Twitch, 20 Items, 22 Idly, 23 Easy.

QUICK CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Pigtail (5)
- 4 Musical exercises (6)
- 9 In the middle of (7)
- 10 Tend (5)
- 11 Flat (4)
- 12 Heraldic animal (7)
- 13 Suitable (3)
- 14 Impartial (4)
- 16 Woman (4)
- 18 Pig's home (3)
- 20 Most abundant (7)
- 21 In this place (4)
- 24 Kenyan tribe (5)
- 25 Consider (7)
- 26 Flag (6)
- 27 Revolving part (5)

DOWN

- 1 Celestial body (6)
- 2 On top of (5)
- 3 Pulls (4)
- 5 Perceptibly (8)
- 6 To do with skin (7)
- 7 Observing (6)
- 8 Fat (5)
- 13 Very cold (8)
- 15 Helps (7)
- 17 Highly glazed red pottery (6)
- 18 Gape (5)
- 19 Written character (6)
- 22 Choose (5)
- 23 At a distance (4)

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Thursday

March 6

A DAY LIKE NO OTHER

Israel is not associated with heavy industry, and yet... This tour will visit the Haifa Bay, including the Oil Refineries, the Kila Aluminium Works, the shipyards, workshops and navy base, plus a boat tour of the bay. We bet you've never seen this part of Israel.

Monday

March 17

LAND OF MILK AND HONEY

Cheese, honey, olive oil and wine - we'll taste them all on our way. We'll start at the organic dairy of Kila, and continue on to the olive oil press at the Druze village of Yammah, then the prize-winning Dabon winery. We'll also visit the bee hives of Shadmo Dvora and its silk production unit. The Galilee is especially beautiful at this time of the year. Join us!

Tuesday

March 25

IRISES ARE BLOOMING IN GILBOA

Every year in March it happens. Irises over Mt. Gilboa. They are the largest, most beautiful and colorful, and some are yellow. We'll visit Nahal Toot on the trail of lupine, the "Cyclamen Hill" of Gilad and Givat Hamoreh. Lunch at Kibbutz Tzfat Zvi.

Thursday

April 3

ACRE - THE CRUSADER CITY

In July 1099, after they had captured Jerusalem, the Crusaders realized they needed a port with a major harbor. So they turned this small city into an important Crusader stronghold. The markets filled with goods, cloth, jewels and precious stones, for the troops to take home as souvenirs. We'll visit the Hospitaliers Quarter and view the new discoveries, the Cenotaph - little Italy in the Holy Land, the Templars Quarter, the Turkish Baths and more.

Thursday

April 24

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE SANHEDRIN

The Bar-Kochba Revolt failed. 600,000 Jews died. Jerusalem was destroyed. Jews were sold as slaves, and Tora study came to an end. But a new center arose in the Galilee, and the towns of Zippori and Tiberias became famous. We'll visit them, as well as Beit Shearim, the burial place of Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi and his family.

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3 DEAD

Continued from Page 1

Instead, the troops stumbled into a bomb trap laid by Hizbullah, which has claimed responsibility for the attack. CC Northern Command Maj.-Gen. Amiram Levine said it appeared that the large explosive device, loaded with metal ball bearings, had been planted recently.

The unit commander and his communications officer and another soldier were in the lead when one of them detonated the device, which was apparently

linked to a trip wire. The possibility that it was operated by a mine linked to the explosive device or by some other method is not being ruled out.

The explosive device was probably camouflaged in a fiberglass mold made to look like a rock. In the middle of the night, in the shrub and tree-covered rocky terrain, it would have been virtually impossible to spot.

Levine noted that the attack brought to four the number of soldiers killed in south Lebanon so far this year. Twenty-seven soldiers were killed there last year. More than half of the fatalities last year were the result of roadside bombs.

ZONE

Continued from Page 1

is changing more quickly than the IDF can adjust. Half of the 27 soldiers killed in Lebanon last year died from roadside charges while patrolling or moving in convoys.

Last year, IDF soldiers discovered over 100 roadside charges. Sophisticated electronic and mechanical methods are used to locate and safely destroy bombs, as well as dogs specially trained to sniff out explosives.

Whenever a bomb is detected, IDF sappers immediately go into action, sealing off the area, questioning soldiers and trying to figure out how Hizbullah planned on using the bomb - all this before disarming it.

Hizbullah is constantly improving its bombs, particularly the way they are detonated. Most of the bombs found in the beginning of the year were rigged to be set off by sophisticated remote control.

Hizbullah guerrillas also have become experts in hiding their bombs. One nearly foolproof method is to hide it in a fiberglass imitation of a stone, believed to be manufactured in Iran.

Not that the army doesn't fight back. According to the London-based *Jane's World Armies*, the IDF's advanced electronic warfare constantly sends out signals that set off bombs. In one incident last year, *Jane's* said, six Hizbullah guerrillas were killed this way when they were laying a device. Israel's electronic success has been so great, *Jane's* said, that Hizbullah has returned to the old trip-wire method of detonation, demonstrated in this latest incident.

Nonetheless, Hizbullah can penetrate the security zone virtually at will, plant explosive devices or lay ambushes. Its activists even bring along a cameraman to videotape attacks.

The footage is later used in the organization's psychological war against the IDF and SLA, and in its efforts to influence Israeli public opinion by bringing the effects of the war into people's living rooms and playing on their emotions.

The question that has to be answered by Northern Command's inquiry into the latest incident is whether a Hizbullah bomb attack in this area could have been anticipated, given Hizbullah's familiarity with the region and assistance from local residents, and therefore averted by sending the troops to a different ambush point along a more unexpected route.

Levine told reporters yesterday that explosive devices are one of the biggest problems facing troops in south Lebanon.

He said the army was trying to deal with them in various ways, including offensive efforts to eliminate or thwart the bomb planters. The army is also taking protective measures, he said, but did not elaborate.

Military sources maintained that the relative quiet of the past few weeks has been used by Hizbullah to prepare for future attacks, especially in the coming month, during which the organization marks several commemorative dates.

February is a month when it is

EDISON

Continued from Page 1

tured at the upcoming Asian Philatelic Exhibition in Hong Kong.

Postal Authority spokeswoman Cigal Galil, speaking on behalf of director-general Moshe Tery and philatelic service director Yinnon Beilin, said officials were shocked to hear of the claims, and that the stamp - produced in the form of a commemorative sheet - was intended to show to the world Israel's "openness to universal themes."

The proposal to include Edison on the stamp was made by the authority's stamp-planning committee and approved over a year ago by the Ministerial Committee on Symbols and Ceremonies, then headed by Uri Baran.

Edison and Bell are only the fifth and sixth non-Jews to appear on Israeli stamps, after Eleanor Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Raoul Wallenberg.

Galil said a philatelic service research team "looked at the *Encyclopedia Ha'ivrit* and found 'nothing hinting' at possible antisemitism in Edison's record. They did not look at any biographies, she conceded.

"If it's true that he was antisemitic, his inclusion in the stamp was done innocently," she said. She did not rule out the possibility that the stamp issue would be cancelled, but did note that this would entail a financial loss and embarrassment.

"From now on, we will be much more careful in selecting stamp themes and conduct deeper research," Galil said. "But sometimes problems appear where you least expect it, *haredim* objected when God's name appeared on a series of synagogue stamps; other Israelis objected when Menachem Begin's stamp appeared with the top of his head left out by the designer; and some religious Jews complained about a series of stamps on dogs and a Chagall stamp with a tiny nude Batseva."

The possibility that Edison had antisemitic views was raised by Stephen Esrati, a philatelic journalist in Shaker Heights, Ohio, and by Ken Lawrence, a vice president of the 56,000-member American Philatelic Society, who

has long been involved in researching Nazism and who recently prepared an exhibit on Holocaust mail.

The Hebrew University's Sassoon Center on Antisemitism was unable to provide concrete information on Edison's views. However, the recent book by noted author Paul Auster, *The Invention of Solitude*, states that Auster's father was hired "for a brief moment" as an assistant in Edison's library "only to have the job taken away from him the next day because Edison learned he was a Jew."

NEWS

in brief

Hamas warns: Don't extradite Abu Marzook

Hamas warned yesterday that if the US extradites Mousa Mohammed Abu Marzook, the head of the group's political wing, to Israel, it will resume its terror attacks in the region. Mahmoud Zahar, a Hamas leader in Gaza, read a statement to Palestinian reporters late Wednesday night that said the US "would be making a mistake" if it extradites Abu Marzook. "The US would do this to appease Israel, but it must know that Hamas holds the US fully responsible, and if anything happens to Marzook Hamas will resume causing instability in the region after a period of quiet that has prevailed here," the statement said. *Jim*

Noam Friedman's remand extended

The Central Command Military Court yesterday extended the remand of IDF soldier Noam Friedman, who carried out the shooting in Hebron last month in which six Arabs were wounded.

The court extended his remand for 15 days, after which an indictment is likely to be filed. Until then, he will be held at the Kfar Shaul mental hospital in Jerusalem. Previously he had been held at an IDF lockup.

The remand extension is designed to allow a panel of three psychiatrists to determine whether he is fit to stand trial. *Jim*

Pirate radio station shut down

Communications Ministry inspectors yesterday shut down a pirate radio station in Rishon LeZion, whose broadcasts had seriously interfered with communications between jets and Ben-Gurion Airport's control tower.

Five workers at the illegal station, which has been closed down several times in the past, were arrested by accompanying policemen. The station owners unsuccessfully tried to hide broadcasting equipment worth tens of thousands of shekels from the inspectors. *Judy Siegel*

Boy gets liver lobe transplant from father

A four-year-old boy from Kfar Manda near Nazareth yesterday became the second Israeli to undergo the transplant of a lobe of a liver from a live donor. Only last month, a girl of the same age from the coastal village Jisr az-Zarka was the first, getting a lobe from the liver of her mother.

The boy, Noor, was infected with hepatitis A approximately two weeks ago and treated at the French Hospital in Nazareth. His condition deteriorated, and he was rushed to the Schneider Children's Medical Center of Israel in Petah Tikva two days ago.

No organ was available, so the father, 29-year-old Khaled Ziada, immediately agreed to donate a part of his liver. He was found a compatible donor and the operation was performed at the nearby Rabin Medical Center-Beilinson Campus. *Judy Siegel*

Alleged Nazi war criminal living in Canada dies

By ROBERT SARNER and STEVE LEIBOWITZ

The death this week in Canada of the most notorious surviving Nazi war criminal never brought to justice has intensified calls by Jewish leaders for Ottawa to speed up long-delayed legal action against the estimated hundreds of suspected war criminals living in Canada.

Alleged Nazi war criminal Antanas Kenstavičius died this week of a heart attack, only hours after Canadian Justice Ministry officials opened deportation proceedings against him. Canadian Jewish officials were upset that, true to a now-familiar scenario, yet another suspected mass murderer escaped justice through a natural death.

Kenstavičius, 90, figured prominently in a Jerusalem Post expose in November which included an excerpt of a conversation secretly recorded last year by New York detective Steve Rabin, in which Kenstavičius admitted involvement in the mass murder of Jews in Lithuania in 1941.

Shortly before his death the Justice Ministry filed 53 documents of evidence against Kenstavičius, who arrived in Canada with refugee status in 1948. A day before his death, the head of the Canadian War Crimes Unit Paul Vickery announced that the tape provided by Rabin would be given into evidence.

Rabin gave his evidence to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police last month in Montreal. Vickery said "The Kenstavičius tape is potentially useful...it appears to place him at the scene of an execution of Jewish people in some detail. That is something we did not previously have, so it's potentially useful."

But the prosecution never had a chance to present its evidence. When word that Kenstavičius had died reached Immigration officials, adjudicator Daphne Shaw-Dyck ordered the deportation hearing terminated.

Justice Ministry lawyer George Carruthers filed the evidence, explaining, "our goal was to file all our material so that it is now in the public domain and the public will know that we did our very best to remove this man."

Carruthers and colleague Esta Resnic had spent 18 months gathering evidence against Kenstavičius, who the Wiesenthal Center had named as one of the 10 leading Nazi war criminals still at large.

EXPATS

Continued from Page 10

As for Israel's neighbors, they take an even more rigid approach than Israel has done up to now. Hundreds of thousands of Jordanians (representing a significant proportion of the country's 4.2 million population) live out of the

SAY

Continued from Page 10

and in Israel as an Israeli. I think your allegiance should be to the place where you have your home and have put down roots.

"Nevertheless, I will exercise my right to vote in future Israeli elections in order to express my opinion and have some impact on who leads the country."

Similarly, Judea Pearl, a UCLA computer scientist, noted that he would probably cast his ballot, even though he may lack the intimate knowledge of Israeli politics an intelligent choice requires. Despite such misgivings, he would vote, because "I hate some of the things happening in Israel, especially the power of the religious parties, which weaken my relations to my native land," said Pearl.

Firmly opposed to the bill are Moshe Rubinstein, a UCLA engineering professor, and his wife Zafa, a psychologist. They feel that "people have no right to vote if they don't have to pay for the consequences that might result. You can't make the rules if you don't play the game."

Another Israeli, who requested anonymity, said that only those who performed their annual military service and paid taxes in Israel should be allowed to vote.

"Can you imagine a hundred Israeli political candidates campaigning in Los Angeles, New York and London?" he asked.

Many Israelis in Britain are more vehement about asserting their right to play a part in the Israeli political process. Anat Koren, who edits the eight-page Hebrew-language weekly *A'London*, which is aimed at Israelis in Britain, keeps her ear close to the ground for the 50,000-strong community there, believes she speaks for many Israelis in Britain when she declares tartly: "If we want a normal state and be like other countries, we should grow up."

By that she means ending the Israeli tradition of demonizing Israeli emigres, legitimizing their choice to live abroad and, like other states, giving them an absentee vote.

Of the Israeli emigrants she has spoken to about the issue, only

Breakthrough in Swiss bank investigation

Commission may waive laws for probe

By BAT-SHEVA TSUR and news agencies

Members of the Swiss Banking Commission said yesterday evening in Zurich that they were prepared to waive Swiss banking laws in order to allow an investigation into the missing Jewish assets from the time of the Holocaust.

The SBC members notified the Volcker Committee which convened in Zurich yesterday that they would allow the accounting firms appointed by the committee to try to locate the assets, Jewish Agency Chairman Avraham Burg said in a telephone call from Switzerland.

Burg, one of the six members of the Volcker Committee, described the move as "a breakthrough." The committee was "shocked" to learn yesterday that, during a 1963 investigation into assets deposited by Jews in Switzerland during the Nazi era, only 26 banks of the more than 500 operating then in Switzerland had "bothered to respond" to the requests of the SBC, Burg added.

At the time, Switzerland returned assets worth Sfr 10 million (then equivalent to \$8m.) to Jewish organizations and individuals, he added.

The Volcker Committee was still meeting late last night.

Meanwhile, Swiss banks said yesterday they were already working fast to set up a Holocaust memorial fund, and urged New York politicians to study the facts before deciding on a threatened boycott.

Bank spokesmen said they took the boycott threat seriously but were puzzled the New York proposals were made now after Swiss businesses and the government last week agreed to a humanitarian fund for victims of Nazi persecution. New York city and state officials



US Commerce Undersecretary Stuart Eisenstat in Zurich yesterday. (Reuters)

warned on Wednesday they might bar government deposits with the banks or make it hard for them to do business in one of the world's top financial centers unless Switzerland compensates Holocaust survivors.

The moves marked the first entry by US state and local governments into a controversy over whether Swiss banks kept millions of dollars deposited in secret accounts by Jews before and during World War II.

"This is hard to understand if you look exactly at what has been done already," Swiss Bankers Association spokeswoman Silvia Matile told Reuters.

In Geneva, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan told a news conference yesterday he viewed Switzerland's dispute with Jewish groups over the funds as a "public relations disaster" and urged a quick end to the row.

He was responding to a question on whether he thought Switzerland's perceived neutrality as host to the UN's European headquarters had been compromised by the controversy.

country, mainly in the US and the Gulf states. Yet at the last elections for Jordan's 80 seat House of Deputies, in November 1993, no one outside Jordan, not even diplomats, was allowed to vote. The same situation will apply in the forthcoming Jordanian elections this November. Egypt took a similar approach in their parliamentary elections in 1995.

Some countries take a much more

controversial approach to the issue of voting rights. In this week's parliamentary and presidential elections in Chechnya, tens of thousands of Chechen refugees were specially bused in from neighboring republics to vote at polling stations set up on Chechnya's borders, while the 200,000 ethnic Russians who have fled the republic could not vote unless they made their own way back to Chechnya.

last election has convinced her that, if the law has not been changed by then, she will join the several hundred Israelis in Britain who regularly make the five-hour flight to Israel on election day to exercise what they deem to be their inalienable right.

BACK IN Israel, residents of Jerusalem came up with a variety of different solutions to what most viewed as a discriminatory voting system. While many suggested that the current law be changed to accommodate those Israelis who travel abroad and find themselves temporarily out of the country at election time, nearly all opposed voting rights for emigrants.

But some put a different spin on events. Daniel Meyer, owner of the Internet Cafe in downtown Jerusalem and a native of Australia, pointed out that it is mandatory for every voting-age Australian citizen to cast a ballot, even those abroad. "I voted via fax," he boasted.

With the advent of modern technology and the ease in which out-of-state voting is arranged by other countries, one American immigrant to Israel, Danny Levine, insisted that since "most enlightened societies allow their citizens to vote abroad," Israel should jump onto the bandwagon.

Travel agent Rina Potyomkin disagreed. "People over there in the Diaspora don't know what is going on here. They sit over there but they do not live with the [terrorist] attacks."

When asked for comment about the proposed legislation, most haredim either had not heard of the pending bill or didn't care. "These things don't interest me," one resident of the haredi Geula neighborhood muttered before continuing to mumble in Yiddish as he hurried down the crowded street.

Self-proclaimed Zionist Danny Mosh Meyer, who works at Yavneh Olami, a religious youth organization for foreigners in Israel, argued that if Israelis abroad are given the right to vote outside of Israel, "we should give the entire Diaspora Jewry the right to vote, because that's what they've become: Diaspora Jews."

But many others disagreed. As soldier Uri Gabbay put it, "Israel is not like any other country. You really need to live here to be able to vote here."

SYRIASPEAK

Continued from Page 7

"When you are in official talks, commitments are formal," he said. "When prime minister Rabin committed himself to withdrawal, he was representing Israel, not himself personally. After Rabin was assassinated, Peres informed us in November through the Americans that he wanted to continue the talks, and he repeated the commitment."

Mualem brushed aside the position of Netanyahu that unwritten, unsigned proposals did not commit his government. "This is a new interpretation of international law."

The Syrian envoy said Israel's commitment to full withdrawal came only after "enormous effort," noting that since the October 1991 Madrid peace conference, "the only issue we would even consent to discuss was full withdrawal."

Under the Likud government of former prime minister Yitzhak Shamir, he said "it was a dialogue of the deaf... After Rabin became prime minister in June 1992, we still insisted on discussing withdrawal only."

"When Rabin finally realized that the Syrians would not move a step ahead in discussing any of the other elements of a peace settlement before being convinced of Israel's intention of full withdrawal, he made the opening."

That was in August 1993, and he negotiated the details of the withdrawal element for almost a year, until July 1994, when he finalized the agreement on full withdrawal to the June 4, 1967 lines.

Asked why Syria insisted on the June 4, 1967 lines rather than the international boundaries, Mualem said: "The difference between the international border and the June 4 border is very slight on the ground, actually. This land has no strategic importance, but the issue is sovereignty. Every inch of our land is sacred to our people."

Rabin's acquiescence in Syria's demand for a total withdrawal "opened the way for negotiations on the other elements of a peace agreement - what prime minister Rabin used to call the 'four legs of the table.'"

With the agreement on withdrawal, Mualem said he and then-Israeli ambassador to Washington Itamar Rabinovich started talks on normalization, security arrangements and a timetable for the implementation of the agreements.

But despite Rabin's agreement to Syria's demand for a withdrawal to the June 4, 1967 lines, Syria, he said, opposed Israel's "exaggerated" proposals for security arrangements and normalization.

The major point of contention on security issues was Israel's request for an early-warning station on the Golan following withdrawal.

Syria, he said, considered this "an infringement of our sovereignty, as if they wanted to spy on us from our own territory - and this in a situation of peace, not a situation of war."

"They already have the technology, including satellites - their own and American - that can do the job far more effectively on the ground than early-warning stations. Their insistence on ground stations put a question mark in our minds."

"They also spoke of the size of the Syrian army, as if what was important was numbers rather than the quality and type of equipment and armaments and such things as the possession of a nuclear arsenal."

"Finally, they insisted that the demilitarized zones reach just south of Damascus. This means you open the capital to them. We refused all these demands."

Syria also opposed Israel's proposals for normalization: "Israel believed that you can push a button to make peace warm, to direct Syrian popular attitudes from a state of war to a state of peace..."

"It is always necessary to educate and inform the people. They need to read the agreement to see whether it conforms to their interests, they need to believe in it. You can't obligate them to buy Israeli goods or visit Israel if they are not convinced that Israel has changed from being an enemy to a neighbor."

"An agreement which is signed by the leadership tells what is required from our side, but we cannot be obliged to make the peace warm." He said Israel "wanted open borders, open markets for their goods, and so on."

"This would have an obvious effect on our own economy. Our economic regulations are not against them; we do not open our markets to any country. And how can you integrate two economies when one has a per capita income of \$900 per year and the other has a per capita income of \$15,000 per year?"

"Such integration is not possible, so we discussed a transitional period during which we could raise our economy to the level where there can be competition without undue hardship on our society."

He denied that Syria was responsible for the slow pace of progress in the talks, even after Rabin's offer of a full withdrawal to the June 4, 1967 lines.

"First of all, people seem to believe that it is the Syrians that are not moving. This is not the case. Israel moved very slowly, very cautiously, until after Oslo II had been concluded, and especially until Peres became prime minister."

"Rabin's strategy was to decouple the Palestinian, Syrian, Jordanian, and Lebanese tracks - he controlled the pace of our negotiations according to what was happening on the other tracks."

"When he moved on the Palestinian track in September 1993, for example, he informed us through the Americans that he could not proceed on the Syrian track because the Israeli public needed time to digest the Oslo accord. So he suspended our talks."

Then he moved on the Jordanian track in 1994 and informed us that the Israeli public needed time to digest the Jordanian-Israeli agreement. Again, our talks were suspended."

"It was only after the Israelis finalized Oslo II with the Palestinians in September 1995 that they turned to us and wanted to move very quickly."

Another reason cited by Mualem for the slow pace was the "personal difference between Rabin and Peres. Both men wanted to achieve a settlement with Syria, but each had his own speed and conditions. Rabin was reluctant, suspicious, very cautious. He moved very slowly, inch by inch."

"When Peres became prime minister, he was in a hurry - he wanted to enter the elections with the Syrian-Israeli agreement in his hand. He wanted to 'fly high and

The difference between the international border and the June 4 border is very slight on the ground, actually. This land has no strategic importance, but the issue is sovereignty.

—Walid Mualem

fast, as he used to say."

"I used to tell the Israeli counterpart that it is important to fly, but it is also very important to know when and where to land - you can't continue to fly high and fast."

"We have our public opinion and need to sell the agreement to them, to get them to accept it. But he couldn't wait. He [Peres] was in office less than three months when he called elections."

Mualem said that earlier, he, Peres's new negotiating head Uri Savir, and US peace coordinator Dennis Ross "set a deadline for ourselves, agreeing to close the remaining gaps and finalize all the elements of an agreement by June 1996."

With the Peres negotiator encoined at the Wye Plantation in Maryland, "there was a new Israeli team and we had started to find solutions. On certain items we found bridges..."

"The expectation was that by September 1996 the final document would be ready," he said. "So we were very surprised when, soon afterward, Mr. Peres called early elections."

"The talks were still going on when secretary [of state Warren] Christopher came to Wye Plantation on January 25 and informed me of prime minister Peres's decision. This was not pleasant news for us and the Americans."

After the suicide bombings in February and March, Israel suspended the talks. "From that time, of course, everything began to collapse," said Mualem, as attention switched from negotiations to combating what he described as "so-called terrorism."

Asked whether, with hindsight, Syria should have accepted the terms offered by the former Labor government, even if this entailed the "heavy price" of an early-warning ground station in the Golan, Mualem replied: "We are the only party who can decide whether the price is heavy or not heavy."

"These things matter to us because it is a question of our sovereignty. We will not permit under any circumstances a ground station in our territory manned by the Israelis - we would refuse even if it would be manned by the Americans. They offered us a ground station in Safed, and we said no because we will not allow one on our soil."

"Given advanced technological means, the only reason for the Israelis to insist on having a ground station is to show that they are in the Golan against our sovereignty." He also rejected suggestions that Syria might have made "a small gesture" to help Peres win the election: "After he began bombing Lebanon in Grapes of Wrath, after

the massacre, how could Syria make a gesture for him?" asked Mualem.

"But more important, Syria does not interfere in Israel's affairs. The Israelis have to vote according to their will. Nobody can impose peace on the interests of both sides. If the Israelis do not see peace in their interests, this is for them to decide."

"This, actually, was a problem with the negotiations all along. We always felt that the Israelis wanted Syria to do their work for them. They wanted us to convince their public that peace was in their interests. We prepared our public for peace with Israel."

"Many things changed in our media, but they wanted us to speak in the Israeli media to prepare Israeli public opinion. They wanted us to allow Israelis to visit Syria."

"We considered such insistence a negative sign: When you do not prepare your own public for peace with your neighbor, this means you do not really have the intention to make peace."

He said there was "no reason" for Syria to embark on talks with the Netanyahu government "if we are not certain that the end result of the negotiations will be a return of the Golan to the lines of June 4, 1967. 'As long as he [Netanyahu] wants to negotiate on the basis of 'peace-for-peace,' he will find no Syrian willing to talk to him."

Mualem stressed that nothing can compensate the Syrian people for losing one inch in the Golan. Not even the inch. The Golan is our territory. It is a sacred cause for the Syrian people, and we will continue to struggle until we recover this territory to the lines of June 4, 1967."

He denied an Israel Television report that he had informed a senior US official that negotiations could resume on the basis of an Israeli declaration of principle recognizing the land-for-peace formula.

"This is not accurate. We have a single position, and it has never changed. The principle of land-for-peace alone is not sufficient... We need Israeli acceptance of what Rabin committed Israel to - full withdrawal to the line of June 4, 1967 - and an Israeli commitment to the Aims and Principles of Security Arrangements paper reached in May 1995 after Rabin's visit to Washington."

"They also have to agree to resume talks from the point where they left off in February 1996. All these issues were approved in the presence of the American sponsor. These points are crucial for Syria."

"If ever we were to agree to return to the table without Netanyahu's commitment both to full withdrawal and to honor the American-drafted paper on security arrangements [which establishes the principle of equality and mutual security issues], we would lose all we achieved in the negotiations."

"It would be like throwing away Israel's earlier commitments and going back to square one." And if the peace process fails, he warned, "all options are open. In Syria, peace is still our strategic option... But you cannot achieve peace by yourself, you need a partner for peace."

"We do not yet see signs that the Netanyahu government is such a partner or that Netanyahu has a strategy for peace."

"He has a strategy for expanding the settlements, which are bullets in the heart of the peace process. For that reason, all options are open."

The envoy declined to elaborate: "All options are open. Let's leave it at that."

* On Israeli settlements in the Golan: "It was understood that President Assad's demand of 'full withdrawal' to the June 4, 1967 lines, included both civilian and military withdrawal."

* On a unilateral Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon: "We would applaud, if Israel fulfilled UN Security Council Resolution 425, obliging it to withdraw to the international border without preconditions, we would be delighted."

* On secret talks: "We never had secret talks with the Israelis. We never had back channel negotiations or 'testing' meetings; everything takes place in the negotiating room. This has been our policy from Day One."

* On his personal relationship with the Israeli negotiators: "You respect your counterpart, but there is no interaction at the personal level."

* On Israeli relations with Turkey: "Israel's military relations with Turkey were formalized in February. It was when the Israelis suspended the talks that they began trying to isolate Syria. One aspect of this was expanding their relations with Turkey. Another aspect was the operation [Grapes of Wrath] in Lebanon."

* On the European role: "Europe's vital interests in the region - historical, geographical, and cultural - have to be recognized. One cannot expect them simply to act as cashiers, paying for the agreements reached. Everyone agrees that the 'American role is essential, but we believe that the European role is not contradictory but complementary.' We consider the European role to be very important."

Knicks hold Cavs to 65

CLEVELAND (AP) — In a season of low-scoring games, something lowly was bound to happen to the Cleveland Cavaliers — the team that likes to play "How low can you go." Sure enough, the Cavs managed only 65 points Wednesday night.

It was the lowest output in franchise history for a team that had

Chambers, injuries

The Charlotte Hornets signed 37-year-old Tim Chambers to bolster their injury-depleted frontcourt. Chambers, the NBA's 2nd all-time leading scorer with 20,024 points in 14 seasons, signed a contract last night.

Chambers, a four-time All-Star, left the NBA after the 1994-95 season and played last year for Maccabi Tel Aviv before returning.

plenty of forgettable moments (two 15-win seasons, the disastrous ownership of Ted Stepien) before taking on its current persona of being as exciting as coach Mike Fratello is tall.

The Cavs, the trendsetters for the current milk-the-clock, slow-down style that consistently produces scores in the sub-90 range, had never been as bad offensively as they were Wednesday night in a 75-65 loss to the New York Knicks.

"When I looked at the score (Cavs 34, Knicks 29) after the first half, I thought it was a high school basketball game," Knicks forward Buck Williams said.

In other NBA games, the Los Angeles Lakers rallied past San Antonio 99-92, Detroit defeated Portland 99-89, Miami downed Boston 103-83, Orlando beat Phoenix 112-105, Seattle crushed Golden State 111-86, Philadelphia nipped Toronto 101-99 and Indiana defeated Charlotte 106-95.

Cleveland shot a shade below 36 percent, scored only 14 points in the second period and then managed just nine in the fourth quarter. John Starks scored 24 points for the Knicks, who played their first game of the season without All-Star center Patrick Ewing (pulled groin).

It was the second-lowest point total ever against the Knicks, who beat the Indiana Pacers to 94 in December 1985. Cleveland's previous record for fewest points was 67, last reached in 1995 against Boston.

"To limit them to nine points in the fourth quarter shows our character," Starks said. "We're on the road, we're tired, but we still got after them." Charles Oakley had 13 points and 11 rebounds, and Larry Johnson added 13 points.

Terrell Brandon, who had three of Cleveland's four field goals in the fourth period, finished with 24 points. The Cavs, who held New Jersey to a franchise-low 62 points Tuesday, were 4-for-19 from the field in the fourth quarter.

"This doesn't go down as an ugly game," said Buck Williams, who had 12 points filling in for Ewing at center. "This goes down as a victory for the New York Knicks. We don't really care if it's ugly."

Lakers 99, Spurs 92: Eddie Jones scored 19 of his 23 points in the second half and Kobe Bryant, making his second start of the season, scored 19 to lead Los Angeles to a road victory.

Trailing 74-67 entering the fourth quarter, the Lakers rallied behind Jones and Bryant. The two combined for 11 points as Los Angeles went on a 19-8 run for an 86-82 lead, and Bryant connected on a 3-point shot with 3:07 left to give Los Angeles a 91-84 edge.

Jones then gave the Lakers their largest lead of the game, 96-88, on two free throws with 1:09 to play.

Jones connected on five free throws in the last minute to help the Lakers sweep a three-game road trip to Seattle, Dallas and San Antonio.

Pistons 99, Trail Blazers 89: Visiting Portland hit 11 of its first 12 shots to take a 24-6 lead. But Detroit didn't give up and used a 17-4 run to take a 55-50 lead at halftime.

Detroit opened the second half with an 11-2 run to go ahead by 14, and the Pistons had no problems the rest of the way.

"Our guys didn't panic. They kept their composure, and got themselves back into the game. That's the kind of commitment to winning this team has made," Pistons coach Doug Collins said.

Heat 103, Celtics 83

Alonzo Mourning had 24 points, 15 rebounds and five blocked shots for the hosts. He also had seven dunks, giving him 13 in his last two games against Boston.

Backup center Isaac Austin had 14 points and 10 rebounds, Voshon Lenard scored 20 and Tim Hardaway added 15.

Boston, which lost its seventh

straight, was playing with six healthy players and a gimpy Alton Lister.

Magic 112, Suns 105

At Orlando, Penny Hardaway had 32 points and eight assists, both season highs, as the Magic won for the eighth time in 10 games.

"When my leg was injured, I couldn't do any of those things — go to the basket and finish. Tonight was the complete game," Hardaway said. "I had everything going for me and had all the confidence. This is the first time since I've been back that I felt that way." Orlando rebounded from a 20-point loss at Washington the previous night to climb back to 500 (20-20) and extend the Suns' losing streak to four games.

SuperSonics 111, Warriors 86: Seattle scored the first 10 points of the game, had an 18-point margin by the end of the first quarter and led by as many as 36 points in the fourth period at Golden State.

Gary Payton had 26 points, including six 3-pointers, and three teammates — Detlef Schrempf, Hersey Hawkins and Craig Ehlo — scored 14 each.

76ers 101, Raptors 99

Jerry Stackhouse made a 12-foot jumper at the buzzer after failing to stop Damon Stoudamire from tying the game on a long 3-pointer with four seconds left.

The victory was Philadelphia's first at home since November 30. It ended a 12-game home losing streak — the longest in franchise history.

EASTERN CONFERENCE				
Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	32	12	.727	—
New York	32	13	.711	1/2
Washington	22	21	.512	9 1/2
Orlando	20	20	.500	10
New Jersey	11	30	.268	19 1/2
Philadelphia	10	33	.233	21 1/2
Boston	8	32	.200	21 1/2
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	38	5	.884	—
Detroit	32	11	.744	6
Atlanta	29	12	.707	8
Charlotte	25	19	.568	13 1/2
Cleveland	24	18	.558	14
Milwaukee	21	22	.488	17
Indiana	20	22	.477	17 1/2
Toronto	15	28	.349	23
WESTERN CONFERENCE				
Midwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	32	11	.744	—
Utah	30	13	.698	2
Minnesota	19	24	.442	13
Dallas	14	27	.341	17
Denver	13	31	.295	19 1/2
San Antonio	11	30	.268	20
Vancouver	8	38	.174	25 1/2
Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Lakers	33	12	.733	—
Seattle	31	13	.705	1 1/2
Portland	25	20	.558	8
Sacramento	19	25	.432	13 1/2
Golden State	17	28	.385	15
L.A. Clippers	16	28	.360	15
Phoenix	15	29	.341	17 1/2



IN CLOSE — Knicks' John Starks drives around Cavaliers' Bob Sura to score in New York's road win on Wednesday.

England awaits 5 Nations opener vs. Scotland

LONDON (Reuters) — England has yet to kick, or pass, a ball in this year's Five Nations championship yet discordant drums are already audible at Twickenham even before the Scots cross the border this weekend.

In rugby, as in cricket and soccer and every other sport worthy of the name, there is nothing quite like beating the English which explains why all those appointed to coach or lead England teams soon discover the job is the modern equivalent of being strapped to a water wheel.

Fervent patriots like Graham Taylor, Bobby Robson, Keith Fletcher, David Lloyd and Mike Atherton have all received

a ducking and now, unless his slow-burning team suddenly catch fire, it is England rugby coach Jack Rowell's turn to endure the treatment.

Rowell has arguably the finest coaching record at club level in English rugby history and was responsible for Five Nations-winning sides in both his first two seasons, so ripples appeared this week when he was accused of spouting tactical "mumbo-jumbo" to his squad.

What made the story even more piquant was the identity of the man throwing the stones. Geoff Cooke coached and managed England to unprecedented success in the

1980s and 90s and knows precisely what happens when media rottwheelers are tossed a juicy bone.

It did not stop him laying into Rowell's management style, criticizing him for confusing the players and raising false expectations, although there were subsequent claims only his negative words had been quoted.

Rowell did his best to stave it all off but Cooke's remarks are not isolated ones. Another former England coach, Dick Best, predicted in November his successor would be sacked in 1997 and the Rugby Football Union was forced to rush out an official denial after a report claimed earlier

this month Rowell was on the verge of the chop.

Rowell's success at Bath, where he shared in 16 trophies over 13 years, was based on encouraging players to take responsibility on the field and not allowing even senior team members to settle into a comfort zone.

His problem with England is that few of them seem inclined to grasp the baton with authority.

Rowell has been trying to prise England away from their "relatively static" style of rugby, but now seems to have scaled down his boldest visions of the future.

Parcells can't break pact with Pats

FOXBORO (AP) — Bill Parcells, who wants to rebuild the New York Jets the way he did the New England Patriots, might have to start out a couple of draft choices short.

That could be the cost to the Jets for Patriots owner Robert Kraft to give up his exclusive rights to Parcells for next season.

The teams were expected to discuss a compensation deal after commissioner Paul Tagliabue ruled Wednesday that Parcells can work for another NFL team next season only if the Patriots agree.

Parcells, who wanted more control of New England's football operation, lost control of his own future just three days after taking the team to the Super Bowl. Kraft can reject any offer the Jets make, forcing Parcells to stay another season or leave the NFL until January 31, 1998, when the Patriots' hold on him ends.

Kraft has praised Parcells' coaching skills, but the two do not have a warm relationship, which could make Kraft willing to let him go.

The Patriots then issued a statement saying they were pleased with the ruling and adding, "Bill Parcells has been an important part of the success of

this organization. It is now time for the Patriots to move ahead and build on the success of the 1996-97 season." Parcells took over a team that was 2-14 in 1992 and led it to the Super Bowl in four seasons.

The Jets were 1-15 last year, the worst record in the NFL, and Rich Kotite announced December 20 he would not return as coach.

The Jets would not consider giving up the top pick in the draft, although cash and current New York players could be part of a compensation package.

For weeks before the Patriots 35-21 Super Bowl loss to the Green Bay Packers last Sunday, reports circulated that the Jets wanted Parcells.

Parcells made it clear he wanted no part of the Patriots after this season when he asked Tagliabue to interpret his contract. Kraft then made a similar request. The commissioner sided with Kraft.

Kelly to retire from Bills: Jim Kelly will end an 11-year NFL career that includes four straight Super Bowl appearances when he announces his retirement today.

Kelly was a college star at Miami, and spent two years in the USFL before joining the Bills in 1986 and turning the franchise around.

Reds sign Deion

CINCINNATI (AP) — Deion Sanders will resume his dual baseball-football career, agreeing today to return to the Cincinnati Reds this season.

It marks Sanders' second tour of duty with the Reds, and a resumption of his baseball career. Cincinnati traded the center fielder to the San Francisco Giants in 1995.

Sanders said he will continue playing football for the Dallas Cowboys, with whom he signed a \$35 million deal in 1995.

"I plan on playing the full season with the Cincinnati Reds," he said.

Gascoigne to play vs. Italy

LONDON (AP) — Despite suffering an ankle injury this week, Paul Gascoigne was named yesterday to England's squad for the vital World Cup qualifier against Italy.

Gascoigne has been on crutches with his leg in a cast since getting injured playing for Glasgow Rangers in a six-a-side tournament in Amsterdam on Monday.

But the former Lazio midfielder is expected to recover quickly, and he was among the 24 players selected by manager Glenn Hoddle for the February 12 game at Wembley.

Goalkeepers — David Seaman (Arsenal), Ian Walker (Tottenham), David James (Liverpool), Tim Flowers (Black-

burn). Defenders — Gareth Southgate (Aston Villa), Stuart Pearce (Nottingham Forest), Graeme Le Saux (Blackburn), Gary Neville (Manchester United), Tony Adams (Arsenal), Sol Campbell (Tottenham), Dominic Matteo (Liverpool).

Midfielders — Paul Ince (Inter Milan), Paul Gascoigne (Rangers), David Beckham (Manchester United), Steve McManaman (Liverpool), David Barry (Newcastle), Robert Lee (Newcastle), Paul Merson (Arsenal), Nicky Barnby (Everton).

Forwards — Ian Wright (Arsenal), Les Ferdinand (Newcastle), Matt Le Tissier (Southampton), Alan Shearer (Newcastle), Robbie Fowler (Liverpool).

Betar Jerusalem coming out strong in season's second half

By ORI LEWIS

Betar Jerusalem will attempt to take the second round of soccer's National League by storm tomorrow afternoon as it tries to consolidate its seven-point lead at the top of the standings after the halfway stage.

Betar will display its best soccer even after the league's month-long layoff and will have a new player up front, Nir Siliva, on loan from Maccabi Tel Aviv, to try and finish the job. Betar is fully aware of the task ahead, and knows that twice before, it led the league at the halfway stage but failed to clinch the championship.

The embarrassing holdup by police of their star, Itzik Zohar, on Wednesday night after a friend of his was found to be in possession of marijuana in Zohar's car, should be brushed aside by both player and club, and the Jerusalemites should be ready for Maccabi Petah Tikva at Teddy Stadium.

Betar knows it can get off to a good start, after notching up a 3-0 win over its opponents in the first round.

Elsewhere, Maccabi Tel Aviv, Maccabi Haifa and Hapoel Haifa are all in the upper half of the

table, and even if they can't win the championship, they will be desperate to grab one of only three European berths on offer at the end of the season.

The battle starts already tomorrow, when Maccabi Tel Aviv hosts Hapoel Haifa. Haifa stunned the champions in the first outing of the current season with a 3-1 win. Maccabi Haifa will also be hoping for some success, as it takes on ailing Hapoel Tel Aviv, which is reeling after a visit by the tax authorities yesterday saw some items, including Felix Halfon's car confiscated.

This weekend's National League fixtures, all matches tomorrow, first-round results in parentheses: Zafirim Holon vs. Hapoel Kfar Sava (5:00 (2-0)); Maccabi Haifa vs. Hapoel Tel Aviv, Kiryat Eliezer (15:00 (3-1)); Hapoel Petah Tikva vs. Hapoel Jerusalem (15:00 (3-0)); Hapoel Taiba vs. Ironi Rishon LeZion, Urmim El-Fahm (14:00 (1-3)); Bnei Yehuda vs. Hapoel Beit She'an, Hatikva Quarter (15:00 (1-0)); Betar Jerusalem vs. Maccabi Petah Tikva, Teddy Stadium (16:00 (3-0)); Maccabi Tel Aviv vs. Hapoel Haifa, National Stadium (16:00 (1-3)); Maccabi Herzliya vs. Hapoel Beersheba, Herzliya (17:45 (0-2)).

IAAF paid Johnson over British ban

RALEIGH, NC (Reuters) — The IAAF has paid Olympic double champion Michael Johnson about \$70,000 to resolve a dispute with British officials who reneged on a deal for him to run in Britain last year, his agent said Wednesday.

The money and the recent resignation of British Athletic Federation (BAF) executive chairman Peter Radford, who was strongly criticized for Johnson's banning from the race at Crystal Palace last July, may lead to Johnson running in Britain this summer.

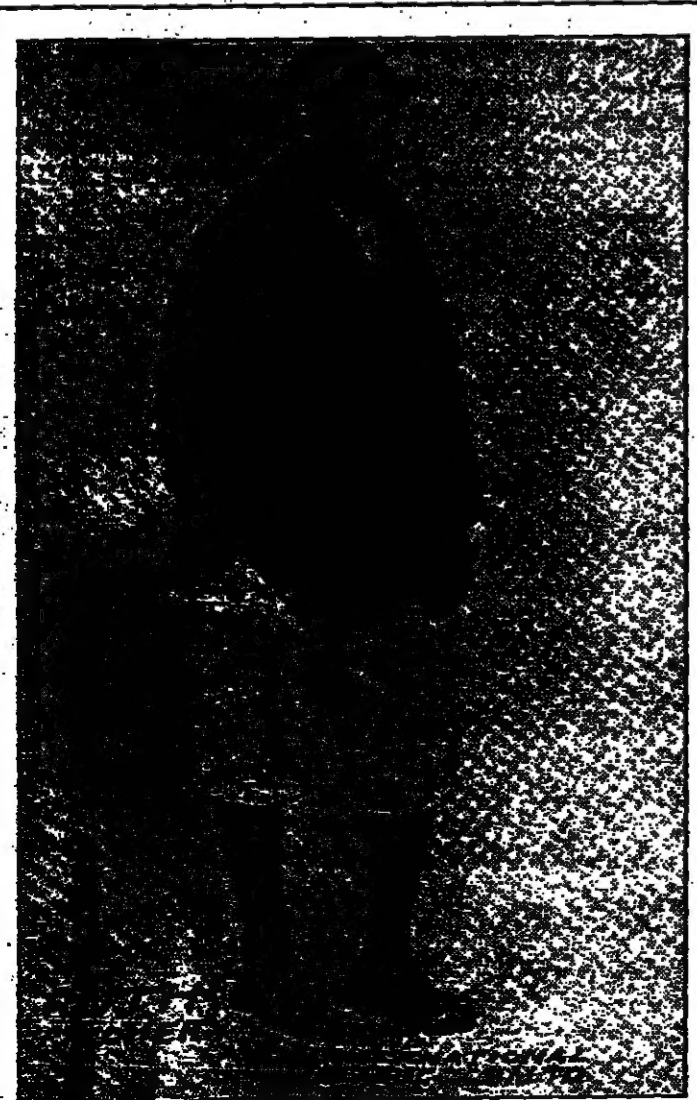
The payment to Johnson followed Hunt's complaint to the IAAF after British officials had dropped Johnson from the 400-meter race, saying his participation would be demoralizing to British runners so close to the Atlanta Olympics.

Johnson and Canadian Donovan Bailey, the 100m world record holder, are scheduled to meet May 31 in Toronto in a 150m race to determine "the world's fastest human," a title both claim.

SCOREBOARD

NHL — Wednesday's results: Buffalo 3, Pittsburgh 1; Phoenix 3, Detroit 0; New Jersey 1, Ottawa 1 (OT); St. Louis 4, Toronto 0; Philadelphia 2, Washington 1; Dallas 3; Anaheim 1; Colorado 6, Los Angeles 3; Edmonton 3, San Jose 1.

Joseph Hoffman, Sports Editor



A Babe in Arms
This 1914 baseball card of Babe Ruth as a pitcher for the International League Baltimore Orioles will go on exhibit at the Babe Ruth Museum in Baltimore to honor the 102nd anniversary of Ruth's birth on February 6, 1895. (AP)

